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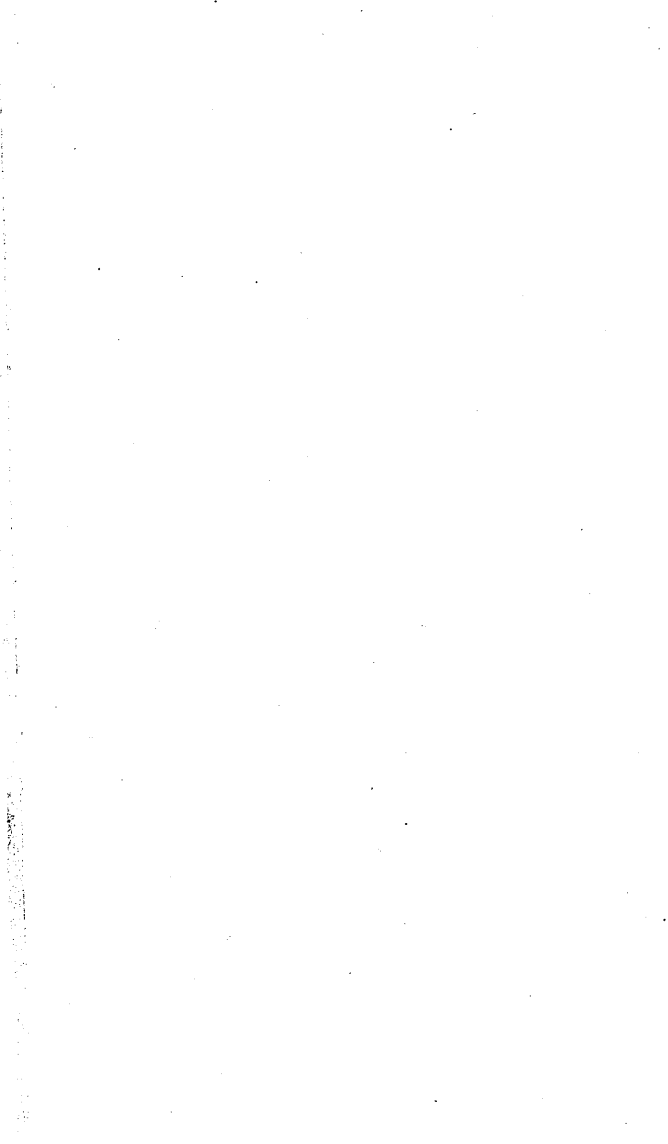


PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

“A few more steps brought them within sight of their Pastor, kneeling on the ground, the subject of a fierce mental conflict.”—Page 20.



“Neither pelting sleet nor drifting snow could blind the sharp eyes of his little white steed.”—Page 174.



Yreville, Charlotte D

EARS

THE
OF

THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST;

OR,

Narratives of the Christian Life.

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CONTENTS.



	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	5
THE MINISTER OF RESOLIS	13
MEMOIR OF AGNES R——	22
THE RANSOMED ONE	33
THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE.....	43
HELEN MACKENZIE	55
THE ORPHAN.....	66
MEMOIR OF E—— H——	77
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PAST	84
LIGHT IN DARKNESS.....	94
THE TRANSPLANTED FLOWER.....	106
NARRATIVE OF JAMES ——	124
REMARKABLE DREAM.....	135
THE FINGER OF GOD.....	140
CONVERSION THROUGH A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.....	149
LUKE HEYWOOD: THE SOLDIER OF FORT GEORGE.....	162
THE HIGHLAND KITCHEN-MAID	173

INTRODUCTION.



WHEN Adam by transgression fell, a blight came over the world in which he was placed, — a blight which shall never be removed until “the times of restitution of all things.”

“The whole creation groans,
And waits to hear that voice
That shall restore her comeliness,
And make her wastes rejoice.”

And till then, all who “love his appearing” must in spirit cry,

“Come, Lord, and wipe away
The curse, the sin, the stain,
And make this blighted world of ours,
Thine own fair world again!
Come then, Lord Jesus, come!”

Once, the heart of man was pure and blessed; *now* it is impure, and defiled by sin. *At first*, all his desire was toward God; *now* he sees no beauty in him that he should desire him.” “The thoughts of his heart

are only evil continually," (Gen. vi. 5.) "He loveth darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." (John iii. 19.) But in the midst of the dreary waste, there are some green spots, like oases in the desert, fed by living water, and rich in undying verdure. From the time when, at his first coming, the Lord of life and glory left his throne above, "the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke i. 78, 79.) He came "to preach good tidings unto the meek: he was sent to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. lxi. 1.) "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John i. 4, 5, 12.) He came to conquer death by dying — to give eternal life by rising again, omnipotent to save. The heart of man however must be prepared for the reception of these glad tidings. And by what agency? *His own?* Ah no! The soil of his heart is like the "ground cursed for his sake," fallow ground, full of briers and thorns. He who is the Author and Giver of life, the Holy Spirit, can alone break the hard and stony soil, and not until "the ploughshare of conviction" tears it up, can the seed of the gospel of the

grace of God find entrance. But that entrance once obtained, the precious seed springs into life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." (John xii. 24.) If there be the death unto sin, there must be the life unto righteousness. Again, referring to the mysterious process of germination in the vegetable world, the Saviour declares, "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear." (Mark iv. 26-28.) So is it with "every one that is born of the Spirit." Wonderful transformation!

The first indications of spiritual life in the heart are, like the first movements in vegetation, almost imperceptible; but in both is the germ of eventual fruition. But as the seed of corn has to be exposed to many influences in the natural world,—heat and cold, shade and sunshine, the early and the latter rain, before the full corn in the ear is perfected; so in the spiritual world has the young believer to pass through his appointed course. God is bountiful as the God of providence, caring for the earthly wants of his creatures, and "making his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. vi. 45.) But how much more

tenderly does he care for those whom he calls children ! Not one individual of his spiritual harvest is ever forgotten by him, and from the first motions of grace in the heart, to the full ripening of the Christian life, each is brought under such guidings of the Holy Spirit as are necessary for him, and is led "by a way that he knows not," to the haven of his everlasting rest. Many are the texts of Holy Scripture which refer to these gracious influences.

"My *doctrine* shall drop as the rain, my *speech* shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as *showers* upon the grass." (Deut. xxxii. 2.) "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord : his going forth is prepared as the morning ; and he shall come unto us as *the rain*, as the latter rain unto the earth." (Hos. vi. 3.) "*I will be as the dew* unto Israel : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth *his roots* as Lebanon. They that dwell under *his shadow* shall return ; they shall *revive as the corn*, and *grow* as the vine." (Hos. xiv. 5, 7 ; compare Micah v. 7.)

"He bringeth *the wind* also out of his treasuries," yet "he stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind." (Isa. xxvii. 8.) "*Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; blow* upon my garden, that *the spices thereof may flow out*." (Cant. iv. 16.)

"For as the rain cometh down, and *the snow* from heaven, and returneth not thither, but *watereth the earth*, and maketh it *bring forth and bud*, that it may

give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. lv. 10, 11.)

And unto "those who fear his name shall the *Sun* of Righteousness arise with *healing* in his wings." (Mal. iv. 2.) "For the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give *grace* and glory." (Psa. lxxxiv. 11.)

Not one of these blessed influences could be spared in causing the seed to spring up, and the grain to ripen for the granary of heaven. The corn so ripened is distinguished from the weeds which grow around it. God's saints are "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom they shine as lights in the world." (Phil. ii. 15.) The more ready for the sickle, the more marked is the wonderful contrast, and the end how different! "The kingdom of heaven," said our blessed Lord, "is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go

and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. xiii. 24-30.)

"The full corn in the ear is *weighty*." The child of God, as his graces become matured, is stablished, strengthened, and settled. He remembers the first dawning of light upon his soul, — so faint, that it was difficult to believe there was spiritual life at all. He can look back and trace the love of the Spirit, in awakening him from the death of sin, — in renewing his will, — in subduing his temper, — and in the application of the blood of sprinkling, in many an hour of deadness, and coldness, and faint-heartedness. And *now* from heaven-taught experience he can say, "I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. viii. 37-39.)

"When *the fruit is brought forth*, immediately he putteth in *the sickle*, because *the harvest is come*." (Mark iv. 29.) There are those "who come to the grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in his season." (Job v. 26.) Others are cut down in early youth, in the

vigour of life, such as Abijah and Josiah of old, — but they were nevertheless *ripe* for the harvest.

“Death cannot come to him untimely
Who is fit to die!”

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” (Psa. cxvi. 15.) Not one of them is lost. “This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose *nothing*; but should raise it up at the last day.” (John vi. 39.) “Not the least grain shall fall to the earth.” (Amos ix. 9.)

And then there is “*the joy of harvest*;” when each ear of corn shall be safely stored away, — where no blight can enter, — no storm assail, — where there shall be no more curse.

It has been the desire of the Editor, in publishing the following Narratives, to illustrate the all-important fact, that man *in himself* is utterly unable to move in his own conversion, — and that from first to last, it is the work of the eternal Spirit. The means used may indeed be very different, but whether it be the overpowering convictions given in answer to the prayer of faith, — or the Lord speaking to the heart “in a dream, in a vision of the night,” — whether the work be effected by the terrors of the law, or the still small voice of the Gospel, — whether the subject of the change be the aged, or the young, — the rich or the poor, — the result, as it appears in these little histories, is one and the same, showing that

the new creation wrought in each, was by the direct agency of the Spirit of the living God.

She now prayerfully commends the work to Him, without whose blessing no labour is profitable, with the earnest hope, that some who read it may be led to follow those "who through faith and patience now inherit the promises." (Heb. vi. 12.) Blessed are they who are the garnered "ears of the spiritual harvest;" but unspeakably awful is the case of those who, at the coming of the Lord Jesus, will have to cry, "the *harvest is past*, the summer is ended, and *we are not saved!*" (Jer. viii. 20.) "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. vi. 2.)

C. D. GREVILLE.

THE MINISTER OF RESOLIS.

BY THE REV. T. M'KENZIE FRASER.

It is very true that God delights to magnify his word above all his name, and that the direct preaching of the gospel is, in the great majority of instances, the Holy Spirit's instrument for awakening and regenerating the soul of man. But it ought to be equally unquestionable that the Sovereign Author of conversion is not restricted to the employment of any one instrument, and that he has given not unfrequent proof of his omnipotence, in the singular and even eccentric character of the method by which he has engendered in the careless heart a lasting and saving concern. No man is entitled to *expect* salvation, who does not seek it in the one appointed way; yet true it is, nevertheless, that God is sometimes "found of them that seek him not," and, when such cases occur, they do but manifest the more strikingly the sovereignty of Divine grace, and the unshackled independence of that Almighty Spirit, who, like the Son, quickeneth whom and how he will. Let us not, however, venture to think that the work of conversion has ever been completed without bringing its subject under the influence of Scriptural truth. No instance stands on record, of a heathen having been Christianized without a knowledge of the gospel scheme of sal-

vation ; and the same process is carried on in the heart of a heathen Hindoo and in the heart of a heathen Briton. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," (Rom. x. 17,) and however singular the means by which the sinner has been awakened, yet a full and perfect faith has never been engendered, save by an acquaintance with the truths of those "holy Scriptures which are able to make man wise unto salvation." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Let the difference be remembered: the sinner may be awakened independently of the word — a special providence — a storm at sea — a death in the circle — a sudden flash of thought — a dream — a song — a passing word — a striking contrast,— these are the instruments sometimes employed for opening up to the view of man the peril of his position: but this end once effected, the inquirer is never instructed or enlightened independently of the word, but is invariably led to search, either for himself, or through the help of others, those Scriptures which alone testify of Christ. An earthquake might be used to awaken the convictions of the hardened jailor; but not till Paul and Silas had "spoken unto him the word of the Lord," did he "rejoice, believing in God."

The reader has probably heard of Mr. Hector M'Phail, an eminently useful minister of a past generation, through whose instrumentality several striking conversions were effected. His own case was perhaps as singular as any. He had married an amiable and pious lady, from Kilmuir* in Ross-shire; a parish not far distant from the sphere of his own labours. Kilmuir was at this time

* We are not quite sure whether Mrs. M'Phail was a native of Kilmuir. She was, however, an intimate friend and convert of its minister.

blessed with the ministry of Mr. Porteous, a man of fervent and even celebrated piety, and under his preaching Mrs. M'Phail had before her marriage been brought to a knowledge of the truth. She had not long resided at the manse of Resolis, till she discovered that however affectionate Mr. M'Phail might be as a husband, he was by no means an edifying minister. He did his best indeed, prepared his sermons with great care, delivered them with a fluent accuracy, and was generally deemed an orthodox preacher. Yet there was a sad want about his ministry. His discourses were flat and lifeless; there was little or nothing of Christ in them; he did not preach *con amore*, and there was an evident lack of that earnestness and fervour which indicate a deep sense both of the value of souls, and of the responsibility attaching to the position of an ambassador for Christ. Deep and piercing was the grief of his sweet young wife on making this discovery, and many an hour did she spend alone with her God in prayer for that husband in whom, though so dearly loved, she had been so bitterly disappointed. For a considerable time matters remained in this state, Mrs. M'Phail finding Resolis a "valley of Baca," in which her soul was growing parched and faint, yet not venturing to touch upon a subject of which the delicacy to a sensitive wife, almost equalled the importance to a pious one. "Oh!" thought she, "if I could but hear Mr. Porteous once more, and obtain the advice of my spiritual father as to my path of duty! Am I to speak to my husband upon this awfully interesting point, and thus use all the influence of a loving and beloved wife for bringing him to a knowledge of my blessed Redeemer? or shall I rather continue to pour out my griefs before my God, and si-

lently wrestle with HIM till I prevail? If I open my lips on *one* subject, shall I not run the risk of losing that very influence on which I found so much, and will it not irritate my husband if I act the part of a lecturess or a remonstrant? Rather than lose the love of that fond heart I would die. But, on the other hand, if I remain silent, may I not be guilty of throwing away an opportunity of faithfulness which Christ puts before me, and can I expect an answer to secret prayer while I refuse the call of Providence? And, how can I be sure that my fears are well grounded? for if I enter upon the subject with modesty and affection, can I reasonably think that I shall lose my husband's love? Besides, whether he love or hate me, is there not even at present a worm at the root of my gourd, and can I enjoy my wedded life so long as there is one subject, to me the most deeply interesting of all, on which we are totally estranged from each other?" Then again the thought would recur, "Is it not rather by my life and walk that I should commend Christ to him, and ought I not perhaps to exhibit the power of vital godliness in being a living 'epistle of Christ, that may be known and read of all?' O for one hour with my old minister!"

Still, however, the gentle wife did not venture to propose a visit to Kilmuir, choosing rather to endure the painful conflict in silence than to risk the infliction of pain upon her husband's mind. But God's time was at hand.

Early on one Sabbath morning, Mr. M'Phail was awakened and attracted by the evident mental uneasiness of his wife. He affectionately inquired the reason of her distress. Thinking this a favourable opportunity for ex-

plaining the cause of her unhappiness, she hinted, as delicately as possible, at the famished condition of her soul, and requested permission for that one day to cross the Firth of Cromarty, and hear Mr. Porteous at Kilmuir. Tremblingly she awaited his reply. To her great surprise, not only did Mr. M'Phail give his permission, but added that he would accompany her to the ferry and see her safely across. In those days, when not more than two or three evangelical ministers were to be found in the whole county of Ross, it was no uncommon thing for the really religious part of the people to journey distances of fifteen or twenty miles in order to hear the gospel. There was literally "a famine of the word of the Lord," and men "wandered from sea to sea and ran to and fro" to seek the bread of life. It would, therefore, excite no surprise to see a person of Mrs. M'Phail's station crossing the Firth, or plodding patiently on the highway so early on the morning of the Lord's day. She reached the manse of Kilmuir while Mr. Porteous was sitting at breakfast, and, having to pass the window of the dining-room, was observed by her old pastor. Astonished by this unlooked-for visit, he instantly rose from table and reached the door before her.

"What has brought you hither?" cried the good man in amazement, "and to-day, too! Has anything happened? Is your husband well?"

Mrs. M'Phail replied that nothing particular had occurred, and that she had merely left home in order that she might have the privilege of hearing him preach again. Whether the keen eye of the minister had detected any embarrassment in the manner of his visitor, or whether the latter part of her reply had given him a clue to her

thoughts, Mr. Porteous immediately divined the cause of her distress.

“Say no more,” he rejoined, “but sit down and take some refreshment for the body, for a walk of seven miles must have tried your strength sorely; and you will then be better fitted for obtaining nourishment for the soul.”

While his guest was seated at table, Mr. Porteous locked himself in his study, and fell on his knees before his God. He was a large-hearted man, that minister; many an hour had he spent in purely intercessory prayer, and perhaps there was never a man since the days of his blessed Master, who had allowed the interests of others to occupy a larger place in his energies and prayers. And when Mr. Porteous took up the case of another, he threw himself into it as if it were his own; like the Syro-Phœnician woman who cried, “Have mercy upon ME,” while her daughter was the sufferer, he made the distress of others a personal matter, and wrestled on their behalf with all the earnestness that he would have shown when pleading for his own soul; for he knew that the “prayers of a righteous man,” in order to be “effectual,” must be “fervent” too.*

We know not the object of the minister’s prayer that morning, but we may easily conjecture the subject of it. A long time elapsed before the study-door was unlocked, but when Mr. Porteous again met his guest, it was with a lighter heart, and a brighter countenance, than he had worn for many a day. Shall we be taxed with enthusiasm if we avow our belief, that the child of God may, before he leaves a throne of grace, have a distinct impres-

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It was still early morning when the minister returned to the southern shore of the Firth. But hours passed away, and he did not make his appearance at the manse. The servants were sent in different directions,—one to the ferry to question the boatmen, and another to the highway to make inquiry at the passers by. The hour of Divine service arrived, but the minister did not enter the church; the bell had long ceased to ring; the people had for some time been seated, when it was proposed that a general search should be made for Mr. M'Phail, in case any evil had befallen him. That he had landed safely in his own parish was evident from the testimony of the boatmen; it was equally clear that he had not taken any of the public roads, as none of the cottagers had seen

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him pass their doors, nor had he been met by any of his parishioners; he must therefore have wandered into the moors or woods to meditate, and been overtaken by some accident or sudden shock of disease. The search was therefore instituted, and continued long without success. But late in the day a party of the parishioners had penetrated deep into a wood at some distance from the church, when they were startled by the sound of loud sobbing and broken sentences, proceeding from a man evidently in great agony of mind. A few more steps brought them within sight of their pastor, who was either lying or kneeling on the ground, the subject, they could at once see, of a fierce mental conflict; and from the expressions which had fallen upon their ears, they at once understood that the cause of his distress was too sacred and personal to excuse their interference. He had been convinced, by the direct agency of the Spirit, on his way from the ferry, with no Bible in his hand, with no companion by his side, but as nearly as we can judge at the time when Mr. Porteous was on his knees in the study of Kilmuir interceding for his soul. After leaving the boat he had begun to think over his wife's confession of spiritual declension. The cause he perceived was in his preaching,—he preached not, because he knew not the gospel; blood-guiltiness was charged home to his conscience—souls were perishing under his ministry—and his own soul was not saved. The Holy Spirit, in answer to a distant cry, had descended upon him as the Spirit of conviction; and so guilty and vile did he feel himself to be, that, instead of returning to his pulpit, he had sought the solitude of the deepest woods, and casting himself on the ground, cried mightily for mercy. For seven years did Mr. M'Phail continue

in deep waters, labouring under a weight of conscious guilt, and it was during this time that he formed that remarkable vow which resulted in the conversion of so many souls,—that if the Lord should be pleased to give him peace of conscience and the assurance of salvation, he would never neglect an opportunity of commending Christ to a fellow-sinner. And God heard the voice of his petition, not by a sudden revelation, not by a miraculous removal of the cloud, but by leading him to a patient, laborious, prayerful study of the word, in which Christ was manifested to him as able to save to the uttermost.

Come, ye who tremble for the ark,
Unite in praise for answered prayer;
Did not the Lord our sorrows mark?
Did not our sighing reach his ear?

Then smaller griefs were laid aside,
And all our cares summed up in one;
Let us but have thy word, (we cried,)
In other things, thy will be done.

Since he has granted our request,
And we still hear the gospel-voice;
Although by many trials pressed,
In this we can and will rejoice.

Though to our lot temptations fall,
Though pain and want, and cares annoy;
The precious gospel sweetens all,
And yields us medicine, food, and joy.

NEWTON.

MEMOIR OF AGNES R—.



I FIRST heard of Agnes R— in March 1822. She had been an invalid for six years, in consequence of a blow she received from her master when in a state of intoxication. She had when young attended a Sabbath-school, and heard much that might have been of the highest importance to her, if she had attended to it. She had often been under conviction of sin, but had relieved her mind by indulging the thought that she would be better at some future period. Like many, she had taken great liberties with the sacred hours of the Sabbath, the recollection of which now filled her with horror, as she was in a great measure ignorant how a sinner can obtain acceptance with a holy and just God.

I endeavoured to show her the only way of escape, by pointing her to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. (John i. 29.)

When I saw Agnes a second time, she seemed remarkably anxious as to how the pardon of sin could be effected. A person under real concern of mind has often many important questions to put on this head. Doubts, difficulties, and apparent impossibilities stand up in thick array. The mind becomes agitated and inquisitive, and the question, "What must I do to be saved?" is felt with deep

earnestness. Such was her situation; hence, whatever turn the conversation took, she had something to propose about the pardon of sin. Being aware that it is the perfect law of God, in the hand of the Spirit, which effects the conversion and salvation of the soul, after conversing with her, I took her Bible, and marked a number of passages for her private perusal and consideration. As her own wickedness was correcting her, she knew that it was an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the Lord; but of the sweets of pardon, flowing through the blood of the atonement, she had not yet tasted, and what added to her alarm was the increase of her bodily affliction, for on that day her diseased side had begun to discharge blood.

At our next interview, her mother and another person were present. For a while she seemed under restraint, looking first at her mother and then at the stranger, as if expecting to hear something from them. When we had joined in prayer, she could no longer restrain her sorrow, and bursting into tears exclaimed, "All my trouble is as nothing to me, compared with the burden of my sins." After becoming more composed, she mentioned that she had got some relief from what I had said to her about the thief on the cross. Persons brought low on account of sin are very ready to think their own case singular and desperate, and to apply to themselves passages which have no application whatever to their situation. Agnes was distressed about "the sin unto death," in the most fearful sense of the word; yet, since "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John i. 7,) there is every possible encouragement to draw near to this fountain in the full confidence of its

being sufficient to do all that God, who cannot lie, has required. Here the chief of sinners have received the remission of sins; and nothing can prevent the blotting out of all iniquity, but a refusal on the part of the sinner to come here for pardon. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon," (Isa. lv. 7.) Christ's wonderful work is completed, and it will hold true while the world standeth, that "none of them that trust in him shall be desolate," (Psa. xxxiv. 22.)

When I saw her again, she was still very much cast down, and complained of past sins as a burden too heavy for her to bear. She could not mention them without weeping; still the darkness was not so great as formerly. She had, at least, occasionally some peace of mind from the gospel,—some gleams of hope, that it might yet be well with her. These, however, were soon darkened with clouds of sorrow, which rendered, if possible, her prospects gloomier than before. If "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," (Prov. xiii. 12;) what must be produced by hope cut off? It was in this way she felt; and of course her anguish of soul increased. To others, distant streaks of light might betoken approaching day; so they did to her for a moment; but when they suddenly disappeared, and left her as before, she inferred that they were only delusive. She began with greater anxiety to watch the current of her thoughts, and when she discovered that they were only evil continually, and that she could not control them, nor fix them on subjects she wished, she exclaimed, "When I would do good, evil is present with me;" language which exactly described

her case, but which she could not believe applicable to any of the people of God.

In the midst of this conflict, some of her friends sought to allay her terrors by telling her she had never done any ill—that she had been a sober young woman, and had no cause to be afraid of death. Their remarks pained her to the very heart. Her conscience accused her of innumerable breaches of that law which pronounces death upon the transgressor. She felt the weight, and acknowledged the justice of the denunciation, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,” (Gal. iii. 10.) Guilty—was the verdict of her whole soul. She declared that, in justice, she deserved wrath to the uttermost. Nothing can be more cruel, or more indicative of want of piety, than to talk of innocence to such a person. This may quiet for a season those who are blinded by the god of this world; but when the eyes are opened to the evil of sin, such treatment only adds torture to pain. Her own convictions were against such a doctrine; for she felt that however little harm she had done to her fellow-creatures, she had been a sinner—a great sinner before God.

A soul newly raised from the death of sin, has many difficulties to encounter. When convinced of her lost state, Agnes thought of prayer, and made the effort to pray; but having long neglected it, she felt ashamed to begin. I exhorted her to seek the Lord, who is full of compassion—whose ear is open to the cry of the poor and needy—and whose comforting words are, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you,” (Matt. vii. 7.)

Some one having told her the substance of last Sab-

bath evening's sermon, she said, "How much would I now give for the means of grace I was once privileged with! I think I would give the whole world to hear another gospel sermon." She desired me to explain Rom. viii. 6, "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I endeavoured to do so, and entreated her to look to the Lord Jesus, instead of poring without intermission over her own past offences, assuring her, that, while I believed they were more than she expressed, yet "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," (2 Cor. v. 19.) And seeing "God has set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past," (Rom. iii. 25,) there was every possible encouragement for the vilest sinner to hope in his mercy. The next time we met, she said, "Oh! sir, your last visit was a happy one to me; I have been trying to take your advice, and I find great relief from it." With peculiar emphasis she added, "What a mercy that Christ will pardon my sins! I have been long afflicted; I was eleven years in the infirmary; but during that time, and for long after, I thought not of God. Oh! sir, was it not wonderful that I could forget him, even in trouble! But nothing less than Divine power can renew the heart. Oh the burden of sin!" With inexpressible pleasure I observed that she now, while mentioning the evil of her doings, mingled in the conversation her hopes of mercy through the blood of sprinkling, and I could no longer forbear considering her as a brand plucked from the burning, as another soul redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. With regard to the

Christian life, she had everything to learn; but she was enquiring, and as teachable as a little child. I felt strongly at this crisis the importance of being directed to speak a word in season to her weary soul. My anticipations of a settled calm after such a storm were premature. The terrors of mind soon after returned for a season upon her, and she was once more greatly cast down, though not as formerly in despair. It was truly affecting to witness her deep sorrow, and to hear her exclaiming, with the utmost fervency, "O sin! sin! sin! Oh that all would take warning from me!" During the time I was with her several people called. She spoke to them all about their souls, telling them how much she had been deceived, and assuring them that a name and a form of godliness are nothing without the reality. Having endeavoured anew to preach the doctrine of salvation through the blood of the cross, as the only balsam for such wounds, she replied, "May be God will, after all, have mercy on my poor soul; and what a wonder that will be! My mind is greatly relieved since you came in. I am better when any person mentions the name of God to me. God bless you, my dear minister." She was overwhelmed with grief of soul in the midst of friends who sincerely sympathized with her under her bodily affliction, but were strangers to her mental agony. Some of them thought she was deranged, while others tried to soothe her conscience by affirming that she had not been such a sinner as she supposed. This, instead of healing, deepened those wounds which Divine love alone could bind up. Nothing but total blindness could, in her case, prevent seeing and acknowledging that "salvation belongeth to the Lord," (Psa. iii. 8;) but this is amongst the

things of the Sp'irit, which the carnal mind receives not. The doctrine of the cross is, unto this day, to every unbeliever, either foolishness or a stumbling-block, and yet men must either be saved by it, or inevitably perish.

When I called again, the first notice I received from her was, "I have been better since you were here." Inquiring how, she replied, "By the things you said to me, particularly that passage, 'Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else,'" (Isaiah xlv. 22.) This was the word on which the Lord had caused her to hope, and in looking to the Saviour, she found rest to her heavy-laden soul. At the time we became acquainted, she had a persuasion that she was by no means destitute of scriptural knowledge, but the best of teachers had now convinced her that she then knew nothing as she ought. Referring to this, she said, "I wonder at my former ignorance and stupidity. I thought I knew much; now I see I knew nothing, and am surprised I have seen so much of late in the very passages in which I saw nothing before."

From this time I went to her to learn as well as to teach, and found great enjoyment in hearing her simple experimental remarks on those portions of divine truth she had been thinking of, and in talking with her of redeeming love. There is something peculiarly interesting in observing the operations of the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation. Agnes depended almost entirely for her growth in knowledge and grace, upon the blessing of God accompanying the reading of the Scriptures. Her Bible lay always within her reach, and was her daily companion and counsellor; it revived her in all her straits, guided her in all her difficulties, and comforted her in all

her sorrows. When able, she read it by day, and meditated upon it during the night-watches. Her views of divine truth became rapidly more clear, correct, and enlarged; and in proportion as her acquaintance grew with Him whom the Bible reveals, her composure and joy of soul advanced; while she became increasingly emptied of self-righteousness, and more and more remarkable for humbleness of mind. Once, when leaving her, she pressed me to stay a little longer. I complied. She became much agitated, and burst into tears, exclaiming, "Oh! sir, I am concerned for my mother;" and went on telling me how kind she was, but she knew not the Saviour, and that she was alarmed to think what must become of her, if she continued without God and without Christ in the world. In stating this uneasiness of mind for her nearest relation, I was struck with the similarity of the teaching of that gracious Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ, and shows them to the soul. With her mother's consent, Agnes soon after this began to read the Scriptures, and to pray with her daily. She also endeavoured to give her serious advice, but she found this a very delicate and difficult task. Nothing, indeed, but a conviction of its being duty, and a sense of her parent's perilous situation, could have prompted her to do this. Perhaps the seed then cast forth may yet spring up. It was watered by many tears and prayers. She had sometimes harsh and unfeeling treatment to endure, and faults she knew not were laid to her charge. Her resort was the throne of grace. While she prayed that patience might have its perfect work, I observed, by her conversation, that her thoughts were much upon her eternal home. She began to express her longing desires to be with

Christ; and about the same time her kind and skilful surgeon intimated that he had done everything in his power for her. This was the first time he had spoken in that manner, and the language to her was, that he considered her case as hopeless. She felt quite composed, and cheerfully replied, "Sir, I am not now afraid to die."

After being absent for a time, I was happy to find she had felt some relief from extreme bodily pain; and more so when she told me that her rejoicing in God had been almost uninterrupted. I inquired what she had been reading. She said, "I like my Bible, and understand it best." "Read your Bible, Agnes," said I, "with prayer, and the Lord will give you his Spirit to seal it upon your heart." She told me that she had got by memory the passages which I had formerly marked in her Bible, and that the best plan she had fallen upon to drive away wandering sinful thoughts, was to repeat and meditate upon them. I was often gratified with her scrupulous attention to the precept, "speak evil of no man." On this she remarked, "my conscience gives me no rest when I speak evil of any one. Although what is said be true, I feel ashamed as if I had taken his purse."

At the close of 1823, her affliction assumed a still more serious aspect than it had previously done; but she said she was wonderfully supported amidst her weakness, and that none but herself knew the extent of her happiness. She mentioned one day's exercise in particular in which she saw herself vile, very vile; but beheld the holiness of God in such a light as made her, she thought, for the first time, love Him purely for his holiness. Often the prospect of a complete deliverance from sin

seemed too much for her enfeebled constitution. Having asked me to make some remarks on the Lord's supper, she wept much at hearing of the Saviour's love in laying down his life for the guilty, and in instituting an ordinance to keep up through all generations the remembrance of his death. Most thankfully would she have embraced an opportunity of sitting down with the Lord's people at his table, but was quite satisfied that what the Lord had appointed was best for her. Her lot in this world, and her affliction, had now, in her judgment, merciful kindness in it. Speaking of her wandering thoughts, she said, "Oh, sir, I was thinking what a mercy it is to feel these a burden! If I did not, I should just be what I once was. Nothing gives me such comfort in the prospect of death, as that after it I shall sin no more. Being delivered from this pained body is nothing to the prospect of being completely delivered from sin."

The outward man continued to decay; but amidst the fainting and the failing of her heart and flesh, God was her strength and portion. One day when she thought herself very near death, she said, "Oh, what would I have done now, had not the Lord opened my heart to receive his word!" When still nearer the close of life, she was resigned and very comfortable. Her words were, "Peace, all is peace." On the day of her death (Sept. 11,) she was heard by her mother singing psalms and hymns. She only ceased doing so about an hour before her departure to that land where the King is seen in his beauty, and praised without ceasing.

How solemn the pause which intervened between her praising God here, and praising him in heaven! It was the season of her passing away, and losing sight of every-

thing earthly; which being finished, she opened her eyes upon Him whom her soul loved, and heard him welcome her to all the joy and bliss of heaven.

Lord Jesus! to thy feet I cling,
My soul with guilt oppressed!
Long have I sought thee sorrowing,
Now let me find thy rest.

I look upon thy cross of pain,
And weep while I adore!
Glory to thee, for thou wast slain,
And praises evermore!

My sins and sorrows thou hast borne
In anguish, on the tree;
Lord, I will look on thee and mourn,
For thou wast pierced by me!

Though guilty in the sight of Heaven,
Yet thou receivest such!
My sins, though many, are forgiven,
Oh, I will love thee much!

THE RANSOMED ONE.

“YE must be born again,” (John iii. 3,) were the words of Him who spake as never man spake; and truly to him who knows nothing of this wondrous change, this is a hard saying—yet it is true. Man may seek to subvert it, and endeavour to evade it, yet the word of our God shall stand for ever, “Ye must be born again.”

The subject of the following narrative can set her seal to the truth of this statement, and is a living witness that the new birth has taken place in her—that she has been “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” (John i. 13.) Louisa—— was one of a large family. Possessed of many attractions personally and mentally, she became endeared to all who knew her, and at the early age of ten, flattered and caressed by her friends, possessing a considerable share of personal vanity, she seldom doubted her inferiority to any one. It was about this period, when on a visit to a relative, that she heard a sermon preached from the following words, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”

(Matt. xxiii. 27.) While listening to the words of the preacher, the impression on her mind was, that they had some reference to her, and during the remainder of her visit, this conviction continued. But "as the morning cloud and early dew," it vanished away. Soon after returning home, Louisa was placed at school, and while there, had opportunities of hearing the gospel faithfully preached. Her understanding was so far enlightened, that she fully believed there was no other salvation than by Jesus Christ, and him crucified. But though convinced of this, the god of this world had blinded her eyes, that she believed not. She was not prepared to give up the pleasures of the world. Like Felix, she delayed to a more convenient season, determining to believe and be saved at some future time. Truly she put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, and was dead while she lived, (Isa. v. 20.)

At the age of fourteen, she was examined for confirmation, along with some of her companions. The instructions of a governess, who took a deep interest in her young charge, and prayed with and for them, made some impression on her. Sometimes tears would flow, and she was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Soon after this, her kind governess left—but she did not forget Louisa. God put it into the heart of his servant to write to her, and warn her against the sin of forgetting she had promised to be the Lord's, adding, "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." (Eccles. v. 5.) She also affectionately entreated her to be decided on the Lord's side, knowing the peculiar snares and temptations which would beset one so attractive and beloved. The contents of this letter were

occasionally thought of, and this was all. Her faithful friend is now numbered among the blessed who die in the Lord; but the bread cast upon the waters was not cast there in vain.

On returning to her home, Louisa was immersed in the pleasures of the world. She was an object of attraction at every party and ball within reach. But she was not happy. Conscience could not sleep; at times there was a longing for something to satisfy the soul, and there was in her heart "an aching void, the world could never fill." At this period, two Christian friends took much interest in her, and the Gospel not being preached in the village where she resided, yearning over her best interests, they offered to take her with them occasionally to a neighbouring church. A note was sent her by one of them to this effect. There was much of the truth in this note, and Louisa was fearful of its being seen by her family. Knowing the gospel scheme of salvation, she wrote a reply in a style which she thought would please her friend,—speaking in the language of Canaan, but knowing it not in her own experience. The individual referred to, called soon afterwards, and no doubt feeling full of Christian love towards one whom she conceived to be seeking the way to Zion amidst many difficulties, kissed her affectionately. But the heart of Louisa smote her, for she knew all was not right, and she could not therefore return the affection bestowed upon her.

For more than two years she continued in this state, halting between two opinions. She would fain have forgotten God, but her God did not forget her; the Spirit strove with her, and she could not rest. At times she would whisper peace, but there was no peace. She

could speak as others did of the externals of religion. Yes, she could talk of Christ, but she did not know Christ. She knew nothing of the blessedness of being made free from the law of sin and death.

At the end of this season, Louisa was married. The idol of her husband, relations, and friends, she conceived herself happy; and as time wore on, and she became the mother of two sweet children—surrounded by all that earthly heart could wish—others might have thought so too. But, ah! it was not so; for the world was her idol, and the semblance of religion was now discarded by her. In infinite mercy, the Lord laid her on a bed of sickness by a dreadful accident. Yet this did not turn her heart to Him, who had so long borne with her; it left her hard-hearted still. Loving darkness rather than light, she restrained prayer before God. Yet the God of long-suffering cast not off his rebellious child. After many wanderings, and wasting of her substance in riotous living, this wayward one began to be in want; there arose a mighty famine in her heart, and no man gave unto her. (Luke xv. 13, 14, 16.) Towards the end of August 1842, by a dispensation of his providence, God spoke loudly to Louisa's heart. Like the jailor of old, she tremblingly cried, "What must I do to be saved?" The determination was then made, in the strength of the Lord, to present herself, body, soul, and spirit, a willing sacrifice to Him whom she had so long made to serve with her sins, so long wearied with her iniquities. The subject of her earnest prayer now was, that she might see all her sins forgiven for Jesus' sake. The past,—with its broken resolutions, slighted vows, and resistance of the Spirit of truth, all came to mind, and like the

dove on the weary waste of waters, she found no resting-place. The word of the living God was as a fire, and like a hammer breaking the stony rock in pieces. Truly she was brought low, but help was nigh at hand: "when men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up." (Job xxii. 29.) In the midst of darkness, sorrow, and temptation, such as none can enter into but those who have passed through the fiery trial, some passages of Scripture would cause a faint ray of light to the weary soul, and one portion of that word in particular, continually gave her hope, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he will bring it to pass." (Psa. xxxvii. 5.)

For the encouragement of those weary and heavy laden ones, who may be seeking rest, I mention the other passages which were peculiarly blessed to Louisa at this time; and it is worthy of special notice that the Lord ever owns his own word. They were these, "Wherefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them." (Mark xi. 24.) "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." (Psa. ix. 10.) "Through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is that shall tread down our enemies." (Psa. iv. 12.)

Many and diverse were the snares which now beset her path. The fear, and the love of man—the temptations of the evil one—the agonizing thought that she could not look for forgiveness, who had so long resisted—these at times seemed to overwhelm her heart. But he who had marked her for his own, suffered her not wholly to despair. On one occasion, while calling to

remembrance the periods before adverted to, and what she could not doubt was the striving of God's Spirit within her, she opened Bickersteth's Scripture Help, at these words, "the sole author of this change is God himself, who by his own Spirit imparts spiritual life, — 'the sons of God are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'" (John i. 13.) The seemingly accidental occurrence came with comfort to the mourner's heart, with the sweet assurance that the desire for salvation, experienced by her, was from God. Her sins were a heavy burden, — her distress was deep indeed, — but Christ was the sinner's Saviour. Louisa's sorrow was that which the world knows nothing of; but now she believed that God was a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, (Heb. xi. 6,) that he would receive her for her Saviour's sake, and in the midst of all, she was enabled feebly to cling to him. Ah! she now knew what wrestling in prayer was — what agonizing to enter the strait gate meant! But her God had thoughts of peace towards her, and not of evil — weeping endured for a night, but a morning of joy was at hand. (Psa. xxx. 5.)

On the 17th of November, Louisa was taken suddenly ill. Death appeared to be close at hand, and fearfulness and trembling overwhelmed her. And why? Because her aching heart had not yet experienced that peace which passeth all understanding — her head did not rest on her Saviour's bosom, — and she saw not her sins washed away in her Saviour's blood. In her deep agony, she entered however into the experience of the patriarch, — "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," (Job

xiii. 15;) and the words of the Christian poet recurred continually to her mind with indescribable comfort —

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.

Trying indeed was her path at this time. Her “eyes failed with looking upward;” yet in the hour of her extremity, her heavenly Father was near, and whispered to the fainting heart of his child, “for a moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.” (Isa. liv. 7.) And again, “when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” “My sheep shall never perish, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” (John x. 4, 28.)

The visits of two of the Lord’s ambassadors were of great comfort at this time; yet though this was gratefully acknowledged, the experience of her heart was, “Jesus only can give peace.” “Deep called unto deep at the noise of his water-spouts.” All his waves and his billows seemed to pass over her head, (Psa. xlii. 7;) and Satan seeing that “the prey was about to be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive to be delivered,” (Isa. xlix. 24,) renewed his attacks, insinuations, and temptations. But a mightier than he prevailed. The voice of the prisoner was heard, and he who “came to seek and to save that which was lost,” drew near and said, “Fear not—thou art mine!” (Isa. xliii. 1.) With feelings which it is impossible to describe, Louisa read her “title clear, to mansions in the skies,” and from blessed heart-felt experience could say, “how true it is, that thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee,

because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. xxvi. 3.) "Behold God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid."

There are those who deem it presumption to believe and know that they are adopted into the family of God. Yet the Scriptures of truth say not so, and it is the privilege of every ransomed sinner to know that he dwells in God, and God in him, by the Spirit given unto him. It is indeed true humility, a simple crediting of his word who cannot lie, and who desires that every one of his children should have "fellowship with him, and with his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John i. 3.) Should any dear child of God read these pages, who is mourning his want of this assurance, yet hungering and thirsting for it, "Be not afraid, only believe." (Mark v. 36.) "Whatsoever things ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. xxi. 22.) You shall "know if you follow on to know the Lord." (Hos. vi. 3.) "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." (Psa. xxvii. 14.) But to return to Louisa. Her mourning was now turned into joy, the winter was past, the rain was over and gone, and the time for singing had come. (Cant. ii. 11, 12.) The wormwood and the gall were not forgotten. Her soul had them still in remembrance, and was humbled within her, and she felt that it had been by a right way that she had been guided unto rest. Her thirstings after holiness now became intense, and she knew that her Saviour, who had done so much in her, and by her, and for her, would yet do for her greater things than these. In her own words we find written, "He hath called me, he hath justified me, he will sanctify me."

In concluding this brief narrative, I may mention, that

Louisa has found her Saviour's word of promise sure and faithful, and that through grace his child has continued faithful unto him. She has known variations of Christian experience. There have been seasons both of sunshine and of shade—of sorrow and of joy; but the Lord is the strength of her heart, and her portion for ever. (Psa. lxxiii. 26.)

Dear reader! Oh taste and see that the Lord is good! Seek, and you too shall find; knock, and to you also the door of salvation shall be opened.

RETROSPECTION.

Praise to Jesus, endless praise!
Saviour mighty to redeem!
While my joyous thanks I raise,
I am still as those that dream!

Faint as dawn upon my sight,
Light from heaven at first arose,
Daily growing clear and bright,
Leading onwards to the cross.

There I knelt, and found the peace,
Sought before with fruitless quest,
There from bondage gained release,
Entered thy refreshing rest.

How I love the steps to trace,
Of conversion's early days,
All the drawings of thy grace,
Leading me to choose thy ways.

Oh, the bliss, to feel my sin
All effaced and all forgiven!
Oh, the perfect calm within,
Sure effect of peace with Heaven!

Sweet security, to dwell
In the shadow of thy hand!
Who the blessedness may tell,
For thy ransomed people planned?

Lord, and was my name indeed
On the page of life engraved?
From eternity decreed,
'Mong the number of the saved?

Humbly at thy feet I lie,
Praises to thy sovereign grace!
Keep me, keep me, till I die,
Till I see thy glorious face!

THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE

ILLUSTRATED IN THE CONVERSION OF M. H.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”—Rom. xi. 33.

It has been frequently remarked, how rarely it happens that a work of real spiritual conversion takes place in those who are very far advanced in years; who, having spent the vigour of life in the disregard of divine things, are first led, at the close of it, to pay any serious attention to the important realities of an unseen world. Now, although probably, the truth of this statement is not to be denied, it is, happily, not without its exceptions. It would seem to the reflecting mind, as though God by thus, in most instances, withholding his enlightening grace from those who have so long undervalued or disregarded it, would teach us the danger of trifling in the great concerns of eternity; and at the same time, by imparting it to some, even at the eleventh hour, would have us understand that the work is his; and that, in the performance of it, he restricts himself by no limits or rules.

The subject of the following brief memoir, M. H., afforded a most remarkable instance of the manner in

which the Great Head of the church is thus pleased at times to display his own power, even when human probabilities seem directly opposed to it; and may serve to encourage those who are engaged in the great undertaking of winning souls to Christ, to believe that no case, in a scriptural and prayerful use of appointed means, is beyond the reach of promises held out to us.

I first became acquainted with M. H. in the year 1831, in one of my usual visits among the poor of a district in which my residence was fixed, and with whom I was in the habit of frequent intercourse. I was attracted to her residence by observing a volume of smoke rising from what I had hitherto considered a neglected barn; but which, on inquiring, I was told was the abode of an aged female, who had early in life received the advantages of a liberal education, but was now, in the decline of her days, at nearly eighty years of age, reduced to a state of extreme wretchedness and misery. Anxious to ascertain the spiritual condition of one under such circumstances, and who, from her advanced age, was necessarily standing on the verge of eternity, I purposed visiting her; but was a little discouraged in my purpose to do so, by a relation living near to her, who stated that she was a bigoted Socinian, averse to all society, and had lived for the last thirty years in the entire neglect of all religious ordinances, and in such total seclusion, that, for a long time past, she had not even crossed the meadow in which her dwelling was situated. Such objections only tended to increase my anxiety to impart instruction to her; and therefore I resolved to call upon her. Imploring the divine assistance, I descended the hill, and approached her abode. "Good morning to you," I said, as I

endeavoured to open a door which was evidently pushed against me. "You have mistaken your house and acquaintance," answered a harsh masculine voice; "your business is with some one else." "No," I said, "it is with you. I come as a friend, to inquire after your welfare. I am sorry to see you so infirm." She surveyed me with an incredulous look; but on my advancing further into the room, if such it could be called, she said, "This is no place for you; I have not a chair to offer you." The smoke which filled the place, prevented me from accurately discerning her features, but I perceived that her voice trembled while she said, "This is my wretched abode." "I hope you can look forward to a better home," I observed; "life is short, and we are all hastening to our latter end." "I know that without being told," was her reply. "And the judgment that follows death is awful," I rejoined. "Ah!" she said, "that I must chance as well as others." "But," I remarked, "let us not venture our eternal interests on chance; let us seek the better foundation, that which is already laid, the true corner-stone, our divine Redeemer." The result of this, my first interview with her, was of the most discouraging and painful nature; all that I advanced seemed to be in vain. She distinctly told me that she did not in the slightest degree believe that Jesus was the Son of God; affirming in the strongest terms, that she was determined not to believe. I anxiously entreated her not to repeat what she had said, and at the same time offered up my earnest prayers at the throne of grace for her, that the Holy Spirit would guide her into the way of truth, by convincing her of sin, and leading her to the Saviour. I asked if she possessed God's word.

“I have a Bible,” she said. “Do you believe in it?” “I regard it as I would any other historical volume.” Finding that her understanding had been cultivated, and that her mental powers were of a superior character, I thought it desirable to direct her attention to some texts of Scripture which refer to the divinity of our Lord, and requested her to place the Bible before me. After considerable reluctance, and some little expression of irritation at my persevering in the request, she said, “If you will see it, there it is,” pointing to a large family Bible covered with the dust of years, and which bore evident marks of having long lain where I found it, unopened and disregarded. She noticed my surprise, and seemed confused; I expressed my deep regret at what I had observed, advised her to begin to read that holy book, and entreated her to pray that God’s Holy Spirit would unseal its contents to her soul. “I never pray at any time,” she said, “and I shall not begin to pray to an unknown God. I do not believe there is a Holy Ghost. I think there is one Supreme Being, whose mercy is as great as his power; and if he chooses to save me, he will effect it without any interference on my part.” The more we conversed the further we diverged from each other. I offered to bring my own Bible and read to her. “I can read without your assistance, and am perfectly acquainted with its contents,” she said. “But it is a pleasure to me to read the Scriptures to a fellow-creature.” She smiled somewhat contemptuously, and said there could exist no mutual feelings between such opposite beings. “Sorrow,” I said, “has always a claim upon sympathy. You appear friendless, and if I could impart any comfort to you, I should rejoice.” This

expression of kindness seemed to win upon her. She extended her hand and shed tears. Still all that I advanced on the subject of religion appeared to produce none, or at the best but a transient effect. The divine light on the page was wanting, and I had another practical proof that the quickening power is God's prerogative. I bowed my head and heart at his footstool, earnestly imploring for his name's sake that he would make known his saving grace to this benighted soul.

From this time I visited her almost daily, in humble confidence that my prayer would be granted; resting on the divine assurance, that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and that with him all things are possible. Having, as I have stated, fallen from better circumstances, her mind was often disposed to revert to subjects with which her early days had made her familiar; and although this seemed very natural, I endeavoured, as much as I could, without wounding her feelings, to check it, as having a tendency to defeat the great object I had in visiting her. On one occasion, she told me my devotion was exclusive and erroneous. "Your prayers," she said, "are imaginative. You entreat the Spirit, in whom I do not believe. You supplicate the Redeemer, whom I consider merely a teacher sent from God. You bring discredit to the Supreme Being by describing yourself—the work of his own hands—as a guilty creature without possessing any inherent goodness. This is the enthusiastic scheme of your deluded imagination." I was taught by all this, that faith, and not reason, was to be kindled into exercise; and that all her powers within her must be prostrated at the foot of the cross, before she could receive its humbling truths as a little child.

Months rolled away before any evidence of change could be discerned. I saw no outward sign of inward grace; and the only material alteration which I discovered in her was a softened manner, and increased attention to my accommodation. Her cavilling powers were so shrewd, that I found it expedient to lay aside all arguments, and rest simply on the word of God and prayer. When any passage powerfully asserted the divinity of our Lord, she would turn away her eyes, and not unfrequently make some remark of a discouraging nature. In this state things went on, my hopes and fears for her alternately prevailing, till at length, in one of my accustomed visits, while I was reading to her the sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Isaiah, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," evincing by her manner the deep workings which were going on within, she exclaimed, "Then Christ is God, and I am a lost, undone rebel: I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, committed the unpardonable sin, trodden under foot the blood of the covenant, stifled conviction, and quenched the Spirit which shall not always strive with man. That holy book condemns me, and calls loudly for vengeance. You are one of God's children, I belong to the evil one." We wept and prayed together. My heart was full. I felt that angels were rejoicing over her, and as I walked home, seemed as though I could call on the inanimate creation to magnify the Lord with me.

From this time she required all the consolations and fulness of the gospel. As she became increasingly

acquainted with the depravity of her nature, she was lost in admiration of the freeness of divine grace. She saw and felt the suitableness of the great remedy, though at first totally unable to apply it to herself.

The divine agency was further needed; and how graciously was it at last granted! The Sun of righteousness had dawned in her heart, but great and long was the conflict before he rose fully on the glorious horizon. The great enemy, who had long held her captive, perceiving that his prey was about to be rescued from him, now assumed another form, in which he came in as a flood. Often for successive days and nights would she deplore the darkness of her understanding, the deadness of her heart, and the coldness and indifference of her feelings. These regrets were accompanied by floods of tears. The Scriptures were invaluable to her, and most bitterly did she condemn herself for having so long neglected them. "I have one ray of hope," she used to say, "which arises from the first prayer which you offered up in this abode being granted. God has shown me my sins; and if one petition is answered, it encourages me to supplicate again and again." Eager now to visit the hitherto neglected courts of her God, she availed herself of the first opportunity; and was drawn there, through frost and snow, in a little chaise provided for her. This was a great effort to her, as it was a public recantation of her known former life and opinions; but, under the influence of divine grace, she became weaned from human applause and human censure. She continued to write bitter things against herself, lamenting her want of faith, love, and genuine repentance; sometimes exclaiming, "I have sinned away the day of grace, and a holy God will

never admit so unrenewed a soul into his immediate presence." At the same time the Scriptures became increasingly precious to her, and, as far as her great age and infirmities permitted, were constantly read by her. I advised her to treasure them up, and to pray over passages committed to memory in her childhood; which, surprising to say, after slumbering so long neglected and forgotten in her mind, were now brought to recollection. After a continued period of much despondency, she received me one morning with a countenance illuminated with joy. "I have hope from the Lord," she said; "He hath met me in the history of Manoah." She repeated the twenty-third verse of the thirteenth chapter of Judges, and begged me to read it to her. I did so. "Surely," she said, "God would not have sent you to me, if he had purposed to condemn me." She wept, but they were tears of gratitude. Henceforward, everything she did seemed increasingly accompanied by prayer: while washing her hands, her prayer was, that her guilty soul might be cleansed from all sin in the blood of Jesus. The Bible was everything to her, and it now whispered peace. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty," was a passage peculiarly blessed to her soul. In this manner did she receive support from the Giver of all consolation. The same Holy Spirit, who had convinced and converted her, now manifested himself to her as the Divine Comforter. She continued to go up to the courts of the sanctuary, and knelt, with an overflowing heart, at the table of her Lord. She took great pleasure in hymns, learning by heart many that I repeated to her. She especially delighted in one, I believe, of Toplady's, "Surely Christ thy sins has borne."

And now the period arrived when she was called upon to give full proof of the stability of her faith. I trembled; and besought the Lord on her behalf. Her son, Edward H——, a professed infidel, was brought in a dying state to her forlorn abode. Great was his indignation upon finding his aged mother no longer a willing recipient of his erroneous principles; and all the artillery of his wit, sarcasm, and irony, was levelled against what he called hypocritical cant. But no one could pluck her out of her Father's hand. The feeling manifested by him against myself, was so violent, that, at her request, I discontinued, for a period, my visits to her, and left her to rest exclusively on the divine arm. Upon parting she said, "I deserve all this, and much more, for have I not reviled the Son of God? But let us meet together daily at our usual hour, and plead at the throne of grace for my wretched child, who is so violently opposed to the means used for his spiritual instruction. When the church clock strikes ten at night we will pray for each other." After some weeks had elapsed, her son died. On my first visit to her afterwards, she was watching for me at the gateway. "Is there any hope?" I said. The anguish depicted on her countenance induced me to add, "Yes, for the living. Your own soul must be the object of your solicitude." "You are right," she replied, "one soul is lost for ever. As a parent I am responsible for it. God forbid I should again trample under foot the blood of the covenant."

The poignancy of her grief visibly affected her health, but seemed to increase the interest she felt in the spiritual welfare of all around her. I have heard her rejoice over sleepless nights as affording favourable opportunities

of uninterrupted prayer for herself and others. She often requested me to enumerate the sick and afflicted whom I visited, that she might supplicate for them at the throne of grace. At this time she was visited by a clergyman who was incredulous as to her renewed heart. He asked who, or what, had wrought this wonderful change. "May I not answer," she said, "in the words of my Saviour, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.' (Matt. xvi. 17.) 'Lord, I believe;' she added, 'help thou mine unbelief.' (Mark ix. 24.)"

Increasing infirmities now made it manifest that the time of her own departure was at hand, and I became anxious that the peace imparted to her might be visible in her dying hour; but this desire I submitted to Him who best knows how to glorify his own name. Her kindness to those about her, and confidence in her blessed Saviour, seemed increasingly to abound. Calling upon her one day when the rain was falling heavily, she addressed me with peculiar affection, fearful lest my exposure to the inclemencies of the weather on her account should be injurious to me; adding, that as she had found Christ, the pearl of great price, she felt assured that neither "things present, nor things to come, would separate her from him." Shortly after this interview, in one of my usual visits to her, I perceived that her end was very fast approaching. She was alone; a kind and pious nurse who had volunteered her services to attend upon her, being for some necessary occasion absent, she turned her head at the sound of my voice, but was unable at the moment distinctly to articulate.

“You know me?” I said. A motion of her head expressed her assent. “Do you know your Saviour, and feel his presence?” She raised her eyes and hands to heaven, and bowed her head. I knelt in prayer; and praised God. How much cause had I to do so! Her speech afterwards returned; and in answer to a remark I made, she exclaimed, “He can save to the uttermost;” “even so, come, Lord Jesus,” “gracious Christ! gracious Christ!” This was my last interview with her. After I left her, she requested her kind nurse to read the third chapter of John’s gospel to her, and dwelt with much delight upon the sixteenth verse, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” She repeated a verse of the hymn,—

Rock of ages, cleft for me,

took an affectionate farewell of those around her, and in the course of the night, retaining her faculties to the last, at the advanced age of eighty-three, sank to rest.

ON THE CONVERSION OF AN AGED WOMAN.

BY THE REV. W. H. BATHURST.

How wondrously does grace display
Its renovating power,
When contrite souls are taught to pray
At the eleventh hour!

How great the mercy that redeems
A wretch grown old in sin,
Piercing the heart to let the beams
Of gospel truth shine in!

That when amid the storms of life
The bark was almost wrecked,
The threatening waves should cease their strife,
And the wild waves be checked ;

That when the blind and heedless soul
God's vengeance long had braved,
Just ere it reached the fatal goal,
It should be turned and saved ;

Oh who but He, whose boundless grace,
Surpassing man's offence,
Compassionates our wretched race,
Such mercy could dispense ?

What power but his, who from the earth
Bade the thick gloom depart,
Can brighten with a second birth
Man's dark degraded heart ?

In vain were human skill applied
To break the shades of night,
To change the leopard's spotted hide,
Or make the negro white.

Oh let thy grace the conquest gain
O'er every human ill,
Man's base propensities restrain,
And bend his stubborn will.

Turn, gracious Lord, both young and old
From Satan's power to thee ;
Teach them to love thy way, and hold
Thy truth from error free.

Hasten the captives to release,
The dead to life restore ;
And let thy word speak hope and peace
To earth's remotest shore.

HELEN MACKENZIE.

BY THE REV. THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D.

IN our early college days, we remember looking down with wonder through the open rails of the South Bridge, on that foul and murky valley along which the Cowgate winds. In those days the railway train neither flew through the air over green fields on its arched and lofty viaduct, nor, plunging with a shriek into the mouth of darkness, bored its way through the bowels of the earth, to emerge with the whistle on the other side of the hill into the sunlight again. Unfamiliar then with these triumphs of science and art, we had heard with wonder of a street that stretched its way beneath a street, and accustomed to nothing beneath a bridge, but the flow of waters, either rushing over the rocks in a foaming torrent, or lying almost still in the glassy pool, where in a summer evening we had watched the play of the salmon, the splash and widening circle of the leaping trout, we gazed with boyish curiosity and wonder through the rails of the bridge on the human tide that rolled on some forty or fifty feet beneath us.

We had more than once visited the room of a very poor student from the remote Highlands, who, up in the top of an old wooden tenement, reached by a crazy stair

with a rope for a rail, found a shelter and a home suited to his narrow finances; and we thought the Cowgate a curious place. Time passed away, and little did we think then, of feeling other interests there, but what arose from the associations and recollections of college days.

“The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is with the Lord.” (Prov. xvi. 33.) And so, after breathing for seven years the fresh air of a country parish, where our pastoral walks carried us through blooming fields, or along the margin of the great swelling sea, we found ourselves toiling in the Cowgate amid scenes, from which all that was pure, and pleasant, and beautiful, and gracious, seemed to have for ever fled. Every year, that district of the metropolis has been sinking deeper and deeper into a state of sin and misery, like the coasts described by geologists, which are in the process of sinking beneath the level of the sea: their foundations being wasted by subterranean fires, the sea has so encroached upon their shores, that the boats of the fishermen now rock over the piers of former ports, and the palaces of departed nobles. For the last century, the state of the Cowgate has been growing daily worse—its manners more degraded, its morals more dissolute, and its inhabitants a lower class. Now, it is completely engulfed in poverty, misery, and crime,—while these are rendered all the more repulsive by some lingering vestiges of a piety, and opulence, and even splendor, that have passed away. Above this door, which now opens on some foul den of guilt, the eye reads a text of Scripture in Greek characters, or in the Latin or Saxon tongue: while vestiges of departed grandeur

may be seen here in a panel, where the remains of a fine painting still loom through the dirt and dust of the smoked wall, or there in the stuccoed ornaments of a rich ceiling, which still cling to the corners of what had once been a noble apartment, but is now divided and subdivided into three or four dwellings of wretched families — or there, in the massy marble slabs of a vast chimney, within which a few cinders, gathered by the cold fingers of poverty from the dirty dust-heaps of the street, now afford, amid the frosty air which blows in through the broken and battered panes, but the mockery of comfort and a fire. Such was the locality where we were called, in part at least, to labour. It was “a valley of dry bones.” The voice of the place seemed to be, “Our bones are dry, and our hope is lost,” (Ezek. xxxvii. 11;) and yet, in proof that God never and nowhere leaves himself without a witness, it was there that Helen Mackenzie, the subject of our memoir, lived — dwelling, and with some of a kindred spirit, grieving over the abounding and surrounding depravity, like Lot in Sodom.

Raising its plain spire above the ragged chimney tops of the dingy houses around, there stands, about the middle of the Cowgate, an old chapel, dating from the days of Popery, and dedicated to Mary Magdalene. It is much altered since the days when its founders were buried within its walls, where, in their stone tombs, they still repose. Still the sunlight, struggling through the smoke, shines through some remains of its stained glass window, and on the Sabbath-day, the bell rings from its time-worn steeple, over the heads of thousands, that own no Sabbath. That chapel is interesting to the man of patriotism and

of piety; it was there that the Reformation, and Church of Scotland were cradled, — within its walls the first general assemblies had met, — beneath that roof, and with his foot on the grave-stone of the founders of that Popish chapel, John Knox had dealt mortal blows on the head of that system of which it was a part and fragment, — and there, the headless body of the faithful Marquis of Argyll, the only peer of Scotland who had redeemed with his blood his plighted faith, was watched and waked the night after his execution, by some noble ladies. — They were not alone that night; for many came to dip a handkerchief in the martyr's blood, in memory of the martyr and his faith.

To us, this chapel has another point of interest. With a beloved and esteemed colleague, we preached by turns there for some two or three years; and presenting a strange contrast to the genteel and fashionable assemblies which we addressed within the walls of the Old Greyfriars parish church, the audience often reminded us of the company gathering from highways and hedges to the marriage supper of the king's son. Recalling to our memory the beautiful parable, the very sight of the halt, the maimed, the lame, the blind, the ragged and the wretched audience gave us courage to preach with faith and hope; and that our confidence in God's word was not misplaced, Helen Mackenzie was a living monument here, — and she is so now in heaven. To use her own words, she had once led a wicked life, — of her early habits and history, we know little or nothing, — she alluded to these but seldom, and never but with shame, as one who entered into the feelings of Job when he

exclaimed, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 5.)

We may remark, that that chapel was opened for the sake of the wretched inhabitants of the district, in the attempt, with God's blessing, to bring them to church, and through the church to the Saviour; and though now, in some respects, a melancholy retrospect, it is pleasant to recal the unmingled satisfaction with which we have often looked on the spectacle so much in contrast with the church of the apostle's rebuke, and with many congregations in our own day.

Here, wretchedness was the passport for admittance. The ladies and gentlemen, who left their cushioned pews to stray down into the Cowgate, must wait patiently by the door till the rightful parties were admitted; and it was a sight well worth seeing, because so seldom met with, to see between two lines of respectability and rank, rags fluttering, and lameness hobbling in on its crutches, and the blind beggar led by a little child to his seat in the house of God, while the gold ring and the gay clothing must be content to stand till others were served.

Through the unwearied attentions of a most devoted city missionary, Helen Mackenzie was induced to fling herself into the stream, and follow the multitude who thronged to the Magdalene Chapel; and there, a change began which ended in her becoming a second Magdalene; and, washing with the tears, which we have often seen streaming from her eyes, the feet of a gracious Saviour, she could say of that chapel, "the place of his feet was glorious." (Isa. lx. 13.)

As in most other cases, the word of God was the

instrument of her conversion: but singular to relate, the wedge was driven home by a dream, which, to say the least of it, was overruled by God, for ends of highest import and everlasting duration. We do not say that the dream came from God, nor claim for it anything approaching the nature of those communications with which in visions and dreams of the night the seers of old were favoured. Avoiding what is certainly obscure, and might probably be dangerous ground — pronouncing no judgment on the origin of the dream, lest on the one hand we should be guilty of presumption, or limit, on the other, the Holy One of Israel, all we say is, that God made use of this remarkable dream in materially promoting a work which he had already begun. For some little time before, she had been in the agonies of the new birth, and with the morning of the night on which she dreamed this dream there came the morning of an eternal day, and she rose from her humble couch to give undoubted evidence that she had become a new creature in Christ Jesus. We do not undertake to give the words and graphic terms in which she described this vision of the night; but according to her story, she found herself standing over the mouth of “the pit,”—perdition yawned all around her: and to whatever side she turned her affrighted eyes, she saw nothing but the smoke of torment, rolling up to heaven, and illuminated by the lurid flames below. She felt as if the support beneath her feet was giving way; and on looking to see what sustained her in this horrible condition, she discovered nothing, to her terror, but a thin plank of wood; but how was that terror increased, when she saw it begin to bend and yield beneath her weight! till at length it

became so bent as to fill her with apprehension that in another instant it would yield to the strain, and snapping in two, precipitate her shrieking into the gulf below. A cry for mercy rose from her lips: and, as she was raising her eyes to heaven, they fell on the gracious face and figure of our blessed Lord, seen through the murky smoke, and standing on the edge of the pit. He stretched himself forward over the depth, and reached out his hand to help. He said nothing, his attitude and action were enough: nor did she stay to utter a word or cry, but seizing that blessed hand, with one mighty bound she sprung from the yielding plank, and clearing the horrible abyss, stood trembling yet rejoicing at the side of Jesus. At that moment she awoke, and found that it was all a dream. Helen Mackenzie entered that morning on a new walk and world of life. The work which the Holy Spirit had begun, received continual accessions, till it rose up from amid the surrounding ruins in the beauty of a spiritual edifice, and after the "similitude of a palace." (Psa. cxliv. 12.) Exhibiting all the graces of a Christian, in less or greater measure, Helen was perhaps most remarkable for her lowly spirit. Her face wore the expression of a penitent. It owed more of its saddened aspect to penitence than to poverty, and amid the scenes where she had sinned, she walked "clothed with humility," (1 Pet. v. 5,) like one who sympathized with the Psalmist, when he exclaimed, "my sin is ever before me." (Psa. li. 3.) Though not neglected by Christian friends, her lot continued, almost to the close of life, one of severe privation. She suffered in silence, often concealing her wants, and steadfastly refusing to be in any degree a

burden to others, if she could earn by the hardest toils, even a crust of bread, and a cup of water.

Her days of grace were passed in the locality where she had once lived in folly and in sin; and in that dark and dreary neighbourhood, she shed around her the lustre of a steady, holy, increasing light. She had died to sin, and temptation had lost its power over her, and keeping her garments unspotted by the world, she walked amid these loathsome scenes of crime and misery, no other way moved by them, than, that when she saw transgressors she was grieved, and "rivers of water ran down her eyes, because they kept not the law of God." (Psa. cxix. 136.) The days of her mourning are now ended. She fell a victim to the cholera at the close of 1848. This pearl Jesus has transferred from its dark abode, to increase the lustre of his crown; and into what a glorious change did the angel of death usher our lowly friend, when she passed from her mean and miserable dwelling, the neighbourhood of the profligate, and the sound of riot and drunkenness, to the company of adoring angels, and the countless multitude of ransomed spirits which shine and sing before the throne!

THOUGHTS ON VISITING A POOR AND AFFLICTED CHRISTIAN.

BY THE REV. W. H. BATHURST.

Is this the palace where a princess dwells,
A favoured daughter of the King of kings?
Within these humble and contracted cells,
Do heavenly spirits wave their guardian wings?

No clustering columns here, no arches wide,
With rich magnificence the structure grace;
No towers or pinnacles, in sculptured pride,
Attest the grandeur of a princely race.

As you approach this dwelling, tread with care,
For narrow, dark, and filthy is the road;
Here heaps of refuse crowd the path, and there,
Unseemly swine take up their foul abode.

That hollow thatch, that broken window pane,
That aperture beneath the crazy door,
Can ill resist the wind and driving rain,
When the sky blackens, and the tempests roar.

Entering the lowly cottage, you behold
No costly and elaborate works of art;
But there's a treasure of more worth than gold —
A pious, humble, and contented heart.

By the fireside her constant place she keeps —
That child of heaven, that princess in disguise;
Wasted with long disease, she seldom sleeps,
And ceaseless sufferings cloud her languid eyes.

And do you marvel that a gracious God
Should for his child so scantily provide?
Should visit her with so severe a rod,
With wealth unblessed, with comforts unsupplied?

Approach! and ask her whether she is left
In hopeless want and misery to pine:
"Although," she cries, "of earthly stores bereft,
A heavenly inheritance is mine.

- “ These light afflictions will work out for me
 A more exceeding weight of endless joy ;
 A few more days or weeks, and I shall be
 Where pain can never reach, nor foes annoy.
- “ My gracious Father still maintains my cause,
 Hears all my prayers, and all my wants supplies ;
 Only those hurtful things his love withdraws,
 Which would impede my progress to the skies.
- “ This changeful world is not my place of rest,
 Soon I shall lay aside this load of clay,
 And with immortal health and vigour blest,
 Shall tune my harp in realms of cloudless day.”

And can religion cheer the mean abode
 Of want and sickness with such wondrous power ?
 Can it so lighten nature's heaviest load,
 And gild with peaceful hope a dying hour ?

Oh ! surely then the Lord hath better things
 Than riches, health, or titles to bestow !
 It is not from such false and shallow springs,
 That streams of real happiness can flow.

His foes may triumph in such gifts as these ;
 A richer portion to his sons is given ;
 For they have peace with God, a mind at ease,
 And a good hope of endless joys in heaven.

Would you the path of highest honour tread ?
 Look up to Him who bore the painful cross —
 To Him who had not where to lay his head,
 And count earth's treasures, weighed with Him, as dross.

He is your richest treasure: He can give
Strength to the feeble, joy to the distressed!
He saves the lost, He bids the dying live,
And guides the weary soul to perfect rest.

In vain let sin entice, or earth decoy,
Let pleasure spread its treacherous snares in vain;
Make Christ your refuge, that you may enjoy
In trouble, peace — in death, eternal gain!

THE ORPHAN.



THE individual to whom this narrative refers, never manifested any desire of human glory; and now that her remains are slumbering in the silence of the grave, it will be sufficient, in speaking of her, to adopt the name which she bore in the last year of her life, when God was pleased to leave her without father or mother, and simply to call her the Orphan.

Descended from an honourable and distinguished family, she received an education appropriate to her circumstances. Her father died while she was young; but she had the advantage of studying under masters, who successfully cultivated the talents with which she was endowed. In a class which she joined for the purpose of receiving religious instruction, she discovered a mind of no ordinary acuteness—a memory retentive and faithful; and, so far as mere knowledge of the facts and doctrines of Scripture was concerned, she speedily outstripped all her companions. When examined for admission to the table of the Lord, her replies were most satisfactory, from the clearness which they evinced, and the accurate form in which they were expressed. But a short time only elapsed after her admission into commu-

nion with the church, when the conviction arose in her mind, that she had deceived both pastor and flock, by declaring her belief in what she did not really receive with her heart. There is a wide difference between the mind being instructed in the fundamental truths of the gospel, and the heart embracing these doctrines, so as to become assimilated to them, in the very depths of the soul. This was a distinction she became painfully conscious she had overlooked: having mistaken the mere efforts of her mind, for that faith, the production of which in the heart, is the work of the Spirit of God, and apart from which there is no true piety. Her conscience, which had long slumbered, now awoke to agonize her with the recollection of the delusion which she had practised on herself; and from a desire to gain direction and peace to her troubled soul, she wrote to her pastor a letter, from which these lines are extracted:—“I am deeply indebted to you, sir, for the great kindness which you have shown me. But, alas! how little do I deserve it! for, after all the pains you have taken to prepare me for a worthy participation of that holy ordinance in which I have lately engaged, I must confess that, by my appearance on that occasion, I deceived both you and my fellow-communicants. Forgive me, I entreat you, dear sir, and pray God that my eyes may be opened to see my sin, as well as the deep ungodliness of the whole of my past life. Oh, if I were to die now, how awful would be my condition! I, who have betrayed the Saviour with a kiss, and professed myself his disciple, while in league with his enemies. Oh that I felt all that solicitude about the salvation of my soul, which its infinite worth demands! Can there yet be forgiveness for me? I conjure you to

beseech the throne of grace for me, and pray the Lord not to abandon me, nor to leave me the victim of remorse and despair. One request more:—have the goodness to tender some words of counsel, if not of comfort, to a poor distressed sinner.”

The reply which was sent was in accordance with our Lord's own words: “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” and “him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” (John vi. 37.) But, for a long time, she continued a stranger to the peace and joy which are to be found in Christ. Her trembling heart refused to grasp the boundless promises of the gospel; yet, though unable to apply them to herself, she still dwelt upon them seriously, and prayerfully. Her Bible was her constant companion; for there alone she discovered the sympathy she needed—there alone she found a Physician to bind up the wounds of conscience, and stop the issue of her sorrows.

The change in her demeanour, her love of solitude, her devotional exercises, and those frequent tears which she strove in vain to hide, all produced a most painful alarm in her family. Some pronounced her an enthusiast, others, a fool. In the midst of the sorrows occasioned by the want of sympathy, and the misapprehension of those around her, it pleased her Heavenly Father to enable her to taste the joys of the life of faith. During the absence of her minister, his pulpit was one day supplied by a fellow-labourer, who chose for his text the Saviour's words, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matt. xi. 28.) This passage, with the illustrations which accompanied it, was the means, in the hand of God, of bring-

ing rest to her soul. She seemed now to have heard this invitation of the compassionate Redeemer for the first time, although she had read and heard it many times before. The Lord in his mercy now opened her heart to feel and understand it, as he "opened the heart of Lydia, to understand the things which were spoken by Paul." (Acts xvi. 14.) From this hour, she confessed Jesus, by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. Neither the hostility which she had to encounter from the ungodly around her, nor the prospect of surrendering her position in society for one more humble and obscure, prevented her from being outwardly what she was inwardly, a disciple of Christ. Ridiculed by the worldly and the openly irreligious, she persevered in her unostentatious walk of duty; blessing those that reviled her, and praying for those that injured her. She leaned on his arm who understood her griefs, and who has said, "The disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his Lord; if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John xv. 20.) "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.)

But fresh trials were in reserve. Her mother was seized with a dangerous illness. Had this affliction occurred when she was in the gall of bitterness, she must, humanly speaking, have sunk beneath the accumulated weight of her trials; but God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, displayed his mercy and wisdom, by withholding one trial until she had been enabled by his grace to come safely out of the other. He first carried her through a sea of troubles to the peace and joy of fellowship with himself, and having thus detached her

affections from earth, by fixing them upon better and more enduring objects, he dissolved the strongest tie which bound her to life, by depriving her of her only remaining parent. While she felt the need of divine support for herself, the state of her dying mother's soul awakened her deepest solicitude; and she ceased not to plead for her conversion to God, without which, she felt that the separation soon to take place between them, would be for ever.

The experience of every Christian attests, that the principle of supreme love to God, and delight in his service, is exposed to many assaults from the world, the flesh, and the devil. These conflicts with spiritual enemies are painful in the extreme, yet their permission by him who never leaves nor forsakes his people, answers a most important end, in preserving and keeping alive a sense of dependence on himself, and of the insufficiency of the heart to its progressive sanctification without divine assistance; and thus, checking the growth of that fearful evil—spiritual pride. From this war of the flesh against the spirit, the Orphan was not exempted. In a letter written under great bodily and mental suffering she says, “The Lord's goodness has been very great to me; I have breathing times, when I can read and pray without distraction. He has surely done more for me than for any other sinner upon earth. But though much has been forgiven me, I cannot say that I love him much; my foolish heart clings to so many other objects than the right one. I feel that this feverish life will soon be over. Oh, pray the Lord to enlighten my darkness, and to give me a firm and unwavering faith in the merits of his dear Son! I can trace the mercy of God in thus gently visit-

ing me with his rod; for my affliction has led me to see more of my sinfulness, and of the loathsome depravity of my heart by nature. I feel like one groping his way in the night without a helping hand—without a guiding star. Oh, when shall I see, in all its brightness and beauty, the Star of Bethlehem! My case is all but desperate. A gleam of hope is all that is left me: pray God that it may brighten more and more, till it is lost in the full assurance of faith.”

While thus called to suffer, from an intermission of that joy and peace which she had known in believing, symptoms of failing strength continued to make themselves increasingly manifest. At length it became evident that consumption was drinking up her life's blood, and hurrying her to the tomb. She did not shut her eyes to the fact; she clung to no treacherous hope of eluding the stroke; she was enabled to feel the all-sufficiency of her divine Redeemer; and “girding up the loins of her mind,” (1 Pet. i. 13,) and “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of her faith,” (Heb. xii. 2,) she pressed on to the end of her course. Some of her friends, who understood not the nature and grounds of a Christian's hope, endeavoured to persuade her that this sickness would not be “unto death.” This intended consolation she received with a smile of kindness, while her silence attested, that it was not the comfort she either desired, or could receive. But when she conversed with those who were partakers of the same grace and hope with herself, it was evident that the prospect of approaching departure gladdened her heart; and, as is often the case in the Christian's dying chamber, it was

not so much the sufferer who needed comfort, as those who gathered around her.

A few days before she left the world, when asked whether she would prefer to live or die, she replied that, if it were proper to give expression to her feelings, she would rather die. She had long bid adieu to the world and its fascinations: the ties that bound her to earth were broken; her treasure was in heaven, — her Saviour was there — the perfect holiness for which she longed was there; and she waited but for the moment of dismissal, to soar and dwell for ever with him whom, not having seen, she loved. (1 Pet. i. 8.) It is an invaluable secret to learn how to die; it consists in securing an interest in Jesus, while we are yet in the full enjoyment of life; — in dying to the world, and its vain and hollow pleasures; — in setting the affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, (Col. iii. 1, 2.) Where this is the case, death is hailed as a friend, who delivers us from the body of sin, and introduces us to those realities with which the believer has been conversant by faith; “death does not end the Christian’s life, it only ends his sins and sorrows.”

Her disease had now reached the last stage of its progress. One day she said to her minister — “Take the Bible, and read to me the seventh chapter of Luke, from the 36th verse; there it is recorded, that a woman who was a sinner anointed the Saviour’s feet with ointment, and, having washed them with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head; that a Pharisee was offended at this; and that Jesus, in defence of the woman, delivered the parable of the two debtors, and finally turn-

ing to the woman, said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' When the passage was read, her pastor inquired if there was anything in it which she did not understand. "Oh," she replied, "I understand it; but I wish to hear it read, it is so tender and touching an exhibition of the love of Jesus!—speak to me of that love—of the infinite compassion of the Lord of grace for penitent sinners; it is the only thing that cheers and refreshes my heart!"

It was impossible to visit her without perceiving that her sense of the divine goodness was so deep, that she seemed at a loss for words suitably to express it. Her language uniformly was, "How kind, how infinitely kind is the Lord to me!" To some, perhaps, this language may appear strange and inexplicable. Suffering as she was under a fatal disease, deprived of her father while yet a child, her mother taken from her a year before, stretched upon her couch, and about to bid farewell to a world which she had newly entered; how is it that the constant theme of her discourse was the goodness, the kindness, the love of God? The gospel alone can furnish the true explanation. When she compared the number of her offences against God with the trials she had undergone, she found that the one bore no proportion to the other; that his strokes were fewer than her offences. She too had been taught to believe, that "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Rom. viii. 28.) She had tasted the ineffable joy that springs from favour and friendship with him. It is true the world esteemed her an object for pity, and called her unhappy; but she enjoyed a peace transcendently greater than life and all its enjoyments can bestow, even "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," (Phil. iv. 7;) and

when, in addition to this, her eye looked above earth and its vanishing objects, and rested on the crown of glory, on the fulness of joy, was it wonderful that she felt strongly, and spoke strongly of her mercies, for had not God been good, infinitely good to her?

At length the Orphan's sun went down. It was evening when her pastor was sent for; he remained by her side until the spirit deserted its tabernacle. "A deep and solemn silence," says he, "pervaded the chamber of death. From time to time, we knelt by her couch, and at intervals, I repeated to her passages of Scripture, particularly those which contain the assurance of a full and free salvation in Christ,—that all who believe are 'justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in him.' (Rom. iii. 24.) 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' (1 Tim. i. 15.) 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' (Matt. ix. 13.) 'Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out.' (John vi. 37.) These promises seemed to bring fresh life and joy to her heart; a sweet smile played upon her marble lips, the tear of gratitude glistened in her eye; the hopes that cheered her departing spirit might be read on her face, already encircled with the shadows of death; and, at intervals, we could catch the gentle whisper of her sinking voice striving to pronounce the watchword of the believing soul, 'Christ, none but Christ!'

"Thus several solemn hours passed away, when, suddenly, she raised her head, clasped her hands, and opened her lips in prayer. All present fell on their knees, her thanksgivings rose to God, for having made known to her

the gospel of his grace, and for having brought her, through much affliction, into the kingdom of his Son. She expressed her gratitude to him who condescended to lay down his life for one so unworthy as herself, and humbly asked him to come quickly and take her home. She did not forget those friends who had still to wrestle for the prize which she had obtained; she especially prayed for a younger sister, now an orphan in a two-fold sense, and for whose soul she felt the deepest solicitude. Nor did she forget her pastor, and the flock of which she had made one, — her neighbours, — and all mankind. Suddenly she paused, her voice became inarticulate, again the broken accents were heard, ‘Lord, Lord, loosen my tongue, open my lips, that I may bear testimony to thy gospel and to thy love, that my last breath may be breathed in prayer.’

“‘Jesus’ was the last word she pronounced; still the spirit ceased not to breathe in prayer. We heard not, indeed, the words, but we could read their significance in the upward glance, which told that she was already conversing at the gates of heaven with her Father and her God. ‘I felt,’ says her pastor, ‘as I never did before, the privilege of dying in the Lord.’ From the depth of my heart I prayed, ‘Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers.’” (Num. xxiii. 10.) In a few minutes more, she gently waved her hand to us in token of adieu, and then sweetly fell asleep in the Lord.

Soon after, I committed the Orphan’s remains to the grave; and in a few days I went alone to visit her resting-place. I knew that it contained only dust and ashes, and yet, as I approached it, the powerful recollections

associated with a life spent in the service of God, awakened within me feelings which the most splendid monument erected by human pride, could not have inspired. Uncovered, I knelt before the Orphan's grave, and a voice from within seemed to whisper, "If thou wouldst die as she died, thou must live as she lived; be not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, endure unto the end, and thou shalt be saved."

INSCRIPTION ON A MONUMENT.

BY THE REV. H. F. LYTE.

What shall we write on this memorial stone?
Thy merits? thou didst rest on Christ's alone.
Our sorrows? thou wouldst chide the selfish tear.
Our love? alas! it needs no record here.
Praise to thy God and ours? his truth and love
Are sung in nobler strains by thee above.
What would'st thou have us write?—A voice is heard,—
"Write, for each reader write a warning word,
Bid him look well before him, and within,
Talk to his heedless heart of death and sin;
And if at these he tremble, bid him flee
To Christ, and find him all in all, like me."

MEMOIR OF E— H—.

BY THE REV. CHARLES BRIDGES.

ON taking the charge of the parish of W—, in the county of B—, E— H— was specially named to me for her piety. When I first saw her, however, I much doubted whether she had ever known a real change of heart; and my fears were confirmed by a closer and longer acquaintance with her. There was indeed everything that could be desired as far as this world goes. She was motherly, clean, and industrious: anxious to restrain her children from the common vices of childhood, and to keep them from the ruinous temptations of idleness and folly. But her religion seemed to be marked merely by an assent to the blessed truths of the gospel, without having felt their power on the heart. She was a stranger to conviction of sin, and to that earnest seeking of the Saviour which always follows the right feeling of our sinful state. Her religious remarks, therefore, seldom went beyond such expressions as these,—“It is all God’s doing—it is all for my good—I must be patient whatever befalls me.” Along with this lifeless image of the gospel, there was only a general interest in the word of God. All parts were alike to her: and there had been no heartfelt application of any of its contents

to her case. She had, however, had the sweet promises of the Scriptures set before her; and possibly the system of cordials, which had been wrongly applied, had tended not a little to deaden her spiritual feeling, which certainly needed more of excitement than of quiet. In this state she continued for a year and a half, from my first going into the parish. She met every remark of mine with the most perfect approbation, though it was plain she had no right feeling.

I hardly ever remember to have felt a stronger impression of the entire weakness of all human teaching without the special application of the Spirit from above. "How forcible are right words!" said the Preacher; and yet how powerless, as to any power in themselves, without a divine influence!

The constant subject of my conversation with her was the need of prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit. "You are ignorant—you must have a clear apprehension of the Saviour to your heart—such as you have not received—such as neither I, nor any man can give you. You can receive nothing except it be given you from above. You cannot say that Jesus is the Lord, so as to have any saving knowledge of him, but by the Holy Ghost. You must pray for this promised blessing—this divine teaching." This was the general purport of my remarks—"line upon line, precept upon precept," in the course of which, the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things that were spoken. About this time she was brought by a violent attack of illness to a near prospect of eternity. On going to see her one day, I found her mouth filled with the praises of her Saviour, and her heart glowing within her, in the hope of being

shortly near him, and with him, and like him for ever. Upon asking by what means this wonderful change had been produced, she said, "You were always telling me to pray for the Holy Spirit. I did not know what you meant at the time; but I supposed by your telling me so often about it, that it must be some great thing: and so I tried to pray: and this has come from it, sir." E— H— was now indeed become "a new creature." All the defects which I had before lamented, were gone. There was now a pulse, the token of life—a keen appetite, the sign of health. It was indeed a resurrection—"life from the dead." (Rom. xi. 15.) As she was gradually brought back to life, her triumphant views of eternity began to mould themselves into deep, solemn, humbling views of sin, and quiet resting in her Saviour. Her sense of ignorance was increased, and showed itself in most ardent desires to be taught more of him who had died for her, and whose name was precious to her, and fragrant as ointment poured forth. She felt the truth of that text, "ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." (Isa. lv. 12.) Every visit to her was marked by some fresh discovery and complaint of the till now unfelt sinfulness of her heart; and yet, so steadily was her eye fixed on her Saviour, that she was rarely troubled with unbelief. Instead of that cold, dull, unmeaning assent, "It is all true, it is all beautiful," her language now was, "It is all mine." Her full belief that Christ was willing and sufficient, led her to cling to him with the genuine simplicity of faith, and the spirit of a little child, and to receive his chastening with all patience and long-suffering unto joyfulness. "I am not afraid of pain, (she used to say,) Christ has sent it; it will do its

work, and then he will take it away." She had great comfort in the hymns that were repeated to her, (for she could not read herself,) and got many of them by heart. The Olney hymns were her greatest favourites. I own, that I have sometimes been jealous, lest the sweetness of hymns should spoil the taste for the sincere milk of the word. I cannot but feel most anxious, that the pure word of God should, like its divine Author, "in all things have the pre-eminence" above every human resource: and I love to point the hungering and thirsting soul in the first place to this source of supply, as the river at which we must drink, and the bread we must eat all the wilderness through. In the instance of E— H—, however, there was no ground for fear. She had her favourite texts and chapters, as well as hymns, which indeed she might call her heritage; for they were applied by the witness of the Spirit to her own case. At one time, when Mrs. B. went to see her, and asked her where she should read, she said, "Read where God says it so many times, that we may know it is quite true." "Where do you mean?" "Why, where God says, 'yea, I will help, yea, I will,' so often, as if he was determined we should not mistake." She referred to Isaiah xli. 10.

Two marks of her gracious state I will shortly advert to—her love to her Saviour, and her longing desire to depart and be with him. With regard to the first, I might say indeed, that her Saviour was her all—none but Christ, none in heaven or earth desired besides him. As she said more than once, "I love you dearly, and I love Mrs. B., but I love Christ so much better, that sometimes I hardly seem to think of you." Many an anxious feeling for her children throbbed in her bosom

nearly to the last moment of her life; but still, the victory of faith in the conflict of a mother's yearnings of compassion, enabled her to resign them to her Saviour's care. Her husband's state of soul was also at times a subject of deep distress and fervent prayer: but whenever her Saviour was again brought before her mind, every cloud seemed to vanish. The sun shone forth, and it was all Christ again: as the apostle said, "to me to live is Christ." (Phil. i. 21.) Then as to her desire to depart—death, the last enemy, was under her feet. She was more than conqueror through him that had loved her. She was so in the habit of waiting for her Lord, that whenever he should come and knock, she could open to him immediately. One day she was found making up some part of her coffin dress; with the tender thought, as she said with the greatest cheerfulness, that it would save her poor husband some little expense after she was gone. "It will be so nice (she would say) to see you all that love Jesus coming after me, one by one. I shall be so glad to welcome you." The only trial which seemed to press heavily upon her, was the prospect of our leaving W—. She made it her prayer, that she might be taken before we went; and the Lord in mercy answered her prayer, for she died about ten days before, although she was as well as she had been for some time past. She could not say much at the last, but the words, "peace, peace," rested on her lips. Some of the last words she spoke to Mrs. B. were, "I cannot tell you what I feel; and if I could, you could not understand me: but I hope you will know it all when you come to my state." There was enough of bodily suffering to exhibit her death in a double aspect, at once terrible and glorious; showing the

bitter fruits of sin, and the power and all-sufficiency of divine grace. A few hours after we left W—, her mortal remains were carried to their resting-place, waiting for the resurrection of the just.

Happy they, who, through grace, are enabled, like E— H—, to count all their own righteousness but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord! (Phil. iii. 8.) To such, Christ will give his peace through life, his succours in death, and his glory through eternity.

CONVERSION.

I will praise thee, my glorious Lord!
 For my spirit is filled with thy peace,
 Thou hast caused me to rest on thy word,
 And made all my misgivings to cease.

Thou hast called me by name, I am thine!
 I am grafted for ever on thee,
 As a branch of the life-giving vine;
 There is no condemnation for me!

Thou hast drawn me with love's tender bands,
 I have tasted how gracious thou art!
 I am graved on the palms of thy hands,
 I am set as a seal on thy heart!

How my soul with its burden was bowed,
 Till I brought my transgressions to thee!
 Thou hast blotted them out as a cloud,
 They are cast in the depths of the sea!

Thou hast hidden thy face from my sin,
Thou hast clothed me in spotless array,
Thou wilt make me all glorious within,
And remove each defilement away.

Take the soul thou hast purchased with blood,
Make it strong to endure to the end,
And uphold me in death's chilly flood,
Oh thou my Beloved—my Friend!

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE PAST.

MY recollections go to a period no further back than my ninth year, when I was sent to school. At that period I had a good deal of religious feeling, though entirely ignorant of the doctrines of Christianity. I loved to read the Bible, especially the history of Jesus, but it was merely with such feelings of natural sympathy as called forth his own admonitory rebuke, "daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me." And yet it had some hold over me, for I remember on one occasion having done something wrong, and incurred displeasure, that when I knelt down to repeat a prayer, the words came into my mind, "If thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift," (Matt. v. 23, 24;) and I rose from my knees and asked forgiveness of the person I had offended. One night I was seized with a great fear of going to hell, and prayed very earnestly to God that he would not send me there; and this, as far as I can recollect, is the only instance in which dread of punishment was ever very strongly impressed upon me.

Years passed on, and childish ignorance gave place to ignorance less childish but not less profound. Under

the ministry of an amiable and talented man, but one who was a stranger to "the truth as it is in Jesus," I took up with a purely Arminian creed, and had no other idea but that heaven might be obtained by human merit; not that I thought I deserved heaven, but I knew no other way, and rested in some vague hope of mercy. Many have sought to obtain a title to heaven by their own doings, and been led to feel that they were labouring in the fire and wearying themselves for very vanity, (Hab. ii. 13,) and so the law has been their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. But mine was a worse condition; I was not even seeking to establish my own righteousness by the deeds of the law, so much as saying, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace." (Jer. vi. 14.)

Such was the religion of my early days—built on a foundation of sand, and soon to be swept away. When about fourteen, I was brought into contact with a person who held infidel opinions, and whose conversation I could not help hearing, though I greatly disliked it. Its tendency was to start doubts and difficulties, working by sap and mine, rather than open assault, and it took effect at last. One day, on my way to school, the thought darted into my mind, "Perhaps the Bible is not true." Never can I forget the feeling of that moment; the earth seemed to give way beneath my feet, and even now, the objects on which my eye at that moment rested, rise vividly before me. Without God and without hope in the world, I was miserable indeed. I thought, if any one knew what was passing in my mind, they would look on me with horror, and my lips were closed. Little did those around me dream of the wretchedness that filled my heart; I envied every one I saw. The most miser-

able looking object I met in the street, failed now to excite compassion; "No," I thought, "they are happier than I am; they believe the Bible." That blessed book I now feared to open; for every time I did so, some fresh doubt sprung up, some fancied discrepancy in the narratives of the different Evangelists, something which I could not believe, and I sadly closed the book. I greedily read everything that came in my way on the subject of evidences, and tried to be convinced by them; but if they made any impression, it was but temporary, and my doubts returned. The best works on this subject, however, I never saw.

From this state of mind, "seeking rest and finding none," I passed into one of indifference. The world was my all. I went through the forms of religion, like multitudes around me; but the Bible was seldom opened. God was "not in all my thoughts," or if I thought of him at all, it was only as God the Creator. It was not the God of the Bible — "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." When my education was finished, I returned home; and in the church we attended, the gospel was not faithfully preached. But I cared not what kind of preaching I heard, for my church-going was mere form. I was a little startled, however, out of my apathy, when it was proposed that I should become a member of the church. Fain would I have held back, for I knew the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was for believers, and therefore not for me. But I had never breathed my doubts to a human being; and being naturally timid, and accustomed to unquestioning submission to parental authority, I durst not object. I had a preparatory interview with my minister. He said that, as

of course I must have been well instructed, it was needless for him to put any questions to me! and he gave me a short exhortation, and a token of admission to the Lord's table. Previous to the day of communion my mind was in a dreadful state. All my former distressing feelings returned in full force, and I would have given worlds to regain the undoubting belief of my childhood. I tried to prepare as I best could. Alas! I knew not the awful guilt I was incurring. I tried to pray. I tried to use the Saviour's name. But my words were mere vibrations of air, empty and meaningless, and, instead of bringing comfort, only added to my disquietude. I went for the first time to the table of the Lord—oh how rashly, how unwarrantably! That I live to record it, I owe to the long-suffering mercy of him, whose precious blood I then ventured to tread under foot—of him who prayed for those that nailed him to the tree, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" (Luke xxiii. 34.) Three times I approached the Lord's table in this way when the annual communion season came round, passing through the same mental process as before; and as soon as it was over, relapsing into indifference.

The Assembly's Catechism describes our fallen state as one of "sin and misery"—and such was assuredly my condition. Its misery I knew. Its sinfulness I had yet to learn. I had destroyed myself, but in the Lord was my help. When there was no eye to pity and no hand to help, his eye pitied, and his right hand brought salvation. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock," (Psa. xl. 2,) even Christ. That stone which I had refused

—which was to me a “stone of stumbling and rock of offence,” has become “the head of the corner—a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.” This is the Lord’s doing, and marvellous in our eyes! Faith is his gift. I could not work myself into believing. The reasonings of men were powerless for that end. But it was “given me to believe on his name”—and in this way:—

One day, reading Cowper’s poems, I came to that passage where he speaks of the believer’s plea at the bar of judgment.

“Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut off all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine.”

And renouncing his works as a ground of acceptance,

“I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was, dependence upon thee.”

I paused over the passage, and then read it again. The idea was quite new to me—a substituted righteousness; and I repeated the words—“My only plea is what it was—dependence upon thee,” with a strange kind of pleasure for which I could not account at the time. I can better understand it now, for it was the first ray of spiritual light that reached my benighted soul, and that ray fell upon the cross of Christ. The following Sabbath we had a service in the parish church, and I heard a neighbouring minister preach from Eccles. vii. 20, “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not!” He entered very fully into his subject, and I listened with the deepest interest. The doctrine

of original sin was entirely new to me, and at once commended itself to my understanding; and I felt that all he said was borne out by observation and experience. A few days after this, I left home to pay a visit, and the Lord in his good providence gave me an opportunity of hearing Mr. B., an honoured servant of Christ, whose praise is in all the churches, and for whom, though personally unknown, I have ever since retained a warm regard as my spiritual father. My friends did not attend his church, and during my visit, I was only there twice; but these were memorable sermons to me. The first, from Rom. i. 16, 17, the Sabbath evening before the communion, and the other the following Tuesday evening. It was chiefly intended for his young communicants, and embodied the instructions given to them in private. The text was, "The word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Eph. i. 13.) This sermon was particularly useful to me, and shed a flood of light upon the plan of redemption. The "glorious gospel" stood revealed in all its majestic simplicity, and beautiful adaptation to the condition of fallen man. I read the Bible with renewed delight. Doubts no longer sprang up to trouble me. God graciously removed them out of my way; and I may here mention, to the praise of his goodness, that never to this hour has Satan been permitted to assail me with atheistic doubts—a temptation with which many of the Lord's people have been exercised, and to which I was peculiarly open. That part of Scripture which now engaged me most, was the epistle to the Romans. The 9th chapter was often read; and strange as it may appear, the sovereignty of God was one of the first doctrines strongly laid hold of. Instead of stumbling

at it, as many have done, I rejoiced in it, and have since seen reason to bless God for giving me clear views on this important subject.

For a number of years after my views had undergone this great change, I made little sensible progress—wandering like the Israelites of old through the wilderness, without coming nearer to the heavenly Canaan. Nevertheless I believe the Lord was thus leading me, to humble and prove me, and show me what was in my heart. I had a constant fear of being left to go back and walk no more with Christ, and this kept me looking upwards for aid. He was speaking to me also by many providences—visiting me with trials the world knew not of, and for which I could ask no human sympathy. Friends with whom I could have taken sweet counsel were far from me, and I could only communicate with them by letter. My outward advantages were few. I scarcely ever heard Christ preached; and in respect of Christian intercourse I “dwelt alone.” But my soul was kept “alive in famine.” Books were useful to me, especially the works of John Newton, and the letters of a dear Christian friend were also very helpful. But like the corn lying under the ground, in the cold late spring-seasons we sometimes see, the seed of the word lay dormant in my soul. There was the cold clear sunshine of head-knowledge, but little heart and little warmth. I needed the influences of the Spirit—the heat and the moisture to cause the seed to grow.

A change of residence brought me under a different ministry, greatly superior in some respects to that I had left. But the trumpet gave an uncertain sound—and though attractive and intellectual, I never found it pro-

fitable. I was not fed. In less than a year, however, in the providence of God, a way was opened up, by which I heard the word of life from men who preached not themselves, but Christ, and who had given proof that their Master's honour was dearer to them than any earthly consideration. Truly I was led in a plain path, and in a way for which I shall have reason to praise God through all eternity.

I have had much cause to thank God, since I became a member of Mr. ——'s congregation. Some providences which have concurred with it have made me look to him whom I have pierced, and mourn, and to know the blessedness of sin forgiven—and something of the fear, grounded upon the sense of pardoning mercy. It is true I have been "led with weeping." Much of my experience is expressed by Newton's hymn, "I asked the Lord that I might grow;" and it is a solemn thing when God lifts the veil, and shows us a little—but a very little, of that corruption whose full extent no eye but his own can discern. With clearer discoveries of sin, I have also had clearer discoveries of the love of God in Christ, and been made to feel how precious Jesus is to the sin-sick soul—"fairer than the sons of men," (Psa. xlv. 2,) and "altogether lovely." (Cant. v. 16.)

Taking a retrospective glance, I cannot but magnify the patience and loving-kindness of the Lord. He might have cut me off in my ignorance and unbelief, but he waited to be gracious, while yet an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenant of promise. He bore with all my provocations. And now his rebellious and ungrateful child can but say still, "The long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." (2 Pet.

iii. 15.) Mercies and judgments have passed over me. Tribulation—the Christian’s portion,—I have had, and of such kind, measure, and duration as he knew to be best for me; and blessed be his name, I can now see love written upon it all. “I will cause thee to pass under the rod, and I will bring thee into the bond of the covenant,” (Ezek. xx. 37,) was a text once given me under circumstances of distress, and it has been graciously fulfilled in my experience. Many a time have I been enabled to set up a stone of remembrance and say,—“Hitherto hath the Lord helped me,” (1 Sam. vii. 12,) and I believe he will support my tottering steps, even to my journey’s end; for, “He hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure,” (2 Sam. xxiii. 5,) and not one of all the blessings it includes shall fail.

With diamond’s edge, with pen of lead,
 Engraved as in the rock,
 The record of my sins I read
 When conscience first awoke.

Tears could not wear those marks away,
 From wrath I could not fly,
 I heard Jehovah’s thunders say
 “The soul that sins shall die.”

Till, led by him, the page I turned
 Where Christ’s sweet mercy shines,
 And saw the hand whose touch could blot
 As a thick cloud, my sins.

His breast received the storm for me,
 His form was marred with grief,
 Smitten that I might healed be,
 Opprest for my relief.

Sin's dark dominion now is o'er,
For I am under grace ;
A frown of wrath shall cloud no more
God's reconciled face.

Though it entangles oft, and snares,
Still dwelling in the flesh,
Christ is my peace, the guilt he bears,
And sprinkles me afresh.

My sins are hid for his dear sake,
Those sins for which he died ;
When in his likeness I awake,
I shall be satisfied.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.



A FEW years since, a lady in Paris, moving in the higher circles of life, of cultivated mind and elegant manners, but a disciple of the infidel philosophy, lost in a fatal duel, her son—her only child; “and she was a widow.”

The Countess of —, a lady not only professing Christianity, but giving decided evidence in her life of the influence of religion over her heart, sought her bereaved friend. She found the widow on her couch, cold — silent — restless — melancholy — and on the verge of despair. The philosophy which she had embraced, left her destitute of any comfort in that time when most she needed solace; it afforded no stay for her sinking spirit—it brought no balm to her stricken heart. It had banished from her thoughts the only real source of consolation; and having led her to renounce God, it offered her no compensation for the absence of him, who is to those who fear him, “their strength and their portion for ever.” (Psa. lxxiii. 26.) It was a distressing scene, and naturally suggested to the mind of her visitor, the course—the only course, which could be adopted, effectually to relieve her sorrow. This was to bring before the attention of the mourner, the scriptural representations of

God, as a being whose nature and attributes render him the worthy object of his creatures' confidence, whose greatness and goodness encourage their dependence, and excite their expectations, when every other resource is proved to be powerless. The Countess, therefore, began to speak of him as a refuge for the distressed soul, — a description which is repeated in the sacred volume, in a rich variety of forms. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psa. xlv. 1.) "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psa. lv. 22.) "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." (Nahum i. 7.) "Thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called." (Isa. liv. 5.) "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Psa. lxxiii. 26.)

Whilst she was thus employed in pointing out the repose which the soul may find in addressing itself to God from the depths of affliction, the wretched mourner turned upon her a vacant stare, and said, "Did you speak of God? Who is he? Where is he? I know nothing of him!" Struck by such an awful instance of infidelity, the Countess answered not; she felt that divine agency alone could avail to restore such a moral ruin. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Zech. iv. 6.) But her interval of silence was an interval of prayer that God would take this mighty work into his own hands, and that the Holy Spirit would condescend to illuminate the darkness, and remove the distressing ignorance of her friend's mind.

Acting in this spirit of prayerful dependence on him, who designs to bless the instrumentality of his people for the accomplishment of his purposes of wisdom and love, she opened a New Testament, and begged to be allowed to read a few passages from a book, which, she said, had been very useful to herself in deep affliction.

The portions which she selected were from the evangelists. There was wisdom in this choice. The history of our Lord and Saviour Jesus, as described by the pen of these inspired men, abounds in passages well adapted to arrest the attention of those, whose bleeding hearts need the application of whatever can mitigate by kindness, and soothe by sympathy. The sufferer may discover there, One who likewise suffered, who was, indeed, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" who was distressed and afflicted; and this, not in consequence of any demerit in himself, but in the endurance of that humiliation to which he had voluntarily surrendered himself on behalf of guilty man; for, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. liii. 5.) The spirit that asks for sympathy, will there discover One, who, having undertaken the work of our salvation, united, in a mysterious manner, his divine nature with that of the lost beings he came to save, that a bond of sympathy might be established between himself and the dependents on his grace; by the assurance that he was in all things made like unto them,—so that they "have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of their infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as they are, yet without sin," (Heb. iv. 15.)—thus encouraging us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time

of need." (v. 16.) The mourner must feel that his case has been considered and provided for, when he hears the voice of him, who "spake as never man spake," announcing, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke iv. 18.) The gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth were so confirmed by a long course of constant and compassionate effort to dry the tear of distress and ease the burden of sorrow, that the heart feels that it may and can lean on his bosom. He was a comforter of the cast-down, whose invitation was, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." (Isa. xlii. 3.)

The effect produced upon the mind of the sorrowing mother as she listened to the portions selected, appeared to be of a soothing kind. No remark was made by either party on the book in which the words of comfort were found. When the Countess rose to leave, she said to the mourner, "I perceive that you are entirely ignorant of the only source of comfort; I cannot, in my own strength, or from my own resources, impart consolation to you. Will you give me one proof of your confidence in my affection and sympathy?" "I will," was the reply. "It is, then," said the Countess, "that you will offer one short prayer in the words I give you, and that you will use it as often as you feel a new occasion of despair, or

a fresh agony of grief, 'O Lord, enlighten thou me, that I may know thee.'"

This recommendation was consistent at once with the dictates of reason and the principles of true religion. God must be known, before he can be served as a Sovereign or enjoyed as a portion. His nature and character, so far as they are revealed in his holy word, must be understood previously to obedience being rendered to him, or confidence reposed in him. It is because men are criminally ignorant of him, in the claims which arise out of his nature and relationship to themselves, that they neither glorify him as the supreme, nor trust in him as the faithful God. He requires intelligent service, and hence he has given us an extended revelation, that we may "acquaint ourselves with him." "They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." (Psa. ix. 10.) And in the pursuit of that salvation which includes present acceptance and future glory, the first importance is attached to a correct and accurate conception of what may be understood of him. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) It was well, therefore, that the prayer should be suggested, "O Lord, enlighten me, that I may know thee." The object implored was the right one; the source to which the petition was directed, was that to which alone application could be successfully made. That illumination which leads the soul to appreciate the perfections of the divine Being, which enables it to discern his excellence and worth, which so impresses the heart as to induce it

to forsake every other refuge, and to yield itself to him, is a divine work. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psa. cxix. 18.) This office of divine illumination is undertaken and accomplished by the Holy Spirit. For this purpose, his special agency was promised by the Lord Jesus Christ, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 26.) "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) Regarded, then, in connexion with this arrangement, the prayer, "Enlighten thou me," offered in humility, was most adapted to the petitioner's circumstances.

For many days the Countess continued her visits, and read the little book, and on every successive visit she discovered an increasing interest on the part of her friend, to the subject referred to in the passages read. They did not often enter into conversation on religion, for the Countess, as often as she attempted it, felt the extreme difficulty of making herself understood by one who had habitually "said in her heart, there is no God," and to whom all that is revealed of him in Scripture was new and strange. She, therefore, confined herself chiefly to reading; accompanying this with much secret prayer for the divine blessing. She was the more encouraged in her hope of success, because she was assured by her friend that she did not fail to offer the prayer constantly; and that when she did not know in what direction to turn her thoughts, or how to disengage them from the horrors

of the past, she found relief in repeating the brief supplication.

After these daily readings had continued some time, the bereaved mother began to express more distinctly the effect of what she had heard. "Your book told me such and such a thing yesterday. That thought has followed me ever since. I wish you would leave it with me till to-morrow." The Countess, however, did not consent; she had two motives for her refusal,—she hoped to increase the desire; and she did not then wish the book to fall into the hands of a sister, whose heart had also been thoroughly imbued with infidel principles, and who had exerted a most baneful influence on the mind of this unhappy widow.

But the mourner's desire to possess this wonder-working volume became stronger and stronger, and the following note was sent, "Can you not lend me your invaluable treasure for a few hours? I will not be unreasonable, it shall be returned to you soon." Being lent, it was sent back with the following note, "I have been deeply affected by your generous confidence, in leaving with me a book so precious to you. I dare not keep it longer; but pray let me have a Bible. It shall never leave me. It shall be my guide—my support,—perhaps, one day, my consolation! When I shall have obtained that holy joy, you shall know of it, that your heavenly charity may be rewarded. Do not leave me to myself. I trust I shall yet understand your object. O my God, give me strength and perseverance. I feel as if I could repose myself in God with confidence. Sometimes I feel as if I could love him with all my soul; and while I ask

him, with fervency, to give the illumination I so much want, I do not, I cannot doubt, but he will communicate the light necessary to my feeble understanding."

After the Bible was sent, this note was received: "I cannot thank you sufficiently for providing me with the only occupation of which I am capable; but I cannot say that your present has brought consolation to my wounded heart. I must acknowledge, that, after reading it, I am more deeply afflicted; I am even more sorrowful, more dejected than before I read it. Shall I tell you why? I am led to look back upon my past life with horror; and the dreadful thought suggests itself, 'Is it not probable that my sins brought on my child his dreadful catastrophe?' O my God! was I indeed the cause of all he suffered, in life and in death? I can only weep abundantly. Divine grace must do all for me."

The sorrow referred to was not surprising. Of the Holy Ghost, it is promised, "that he shall convince of sin." That knowledge of God which he imparts is inseparably connected with the knowledge of one's self, and the more the light of divine truth, with respect to the holiness, purity, and majesty of God, is shed upon the mind, the greater is the opportunity of discerning the depth of personal unworthiness and guilt. The Holy Spirit does not become the Comforter by applying a false peace in the hour of distress. He does not heal the conscience slightly, but lays bare the poison that lurks within, that the means of its removal may be more successfully employed. He exposes the malady of the heart, and then applies the gospel to the mind which he has prepared to appreciate it. "They that be whole,"

said the Saviour, "need not a physician, but they that are sick." (Matt. ix. 12.)

A knowledge gained from personal experience, of the essential principles of true religion, enabled the Countess at once to meet the case of her friend. She addressed to her a letter, the great object of which was to present to her view the Lord Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the gospel—as the physician of souls—the only hope of the sinner. The fulness and freeness of his grace were dwelt upon, his promise that he would cast out none who came to him, (John vi. 37;) his power, that "he is able to save to the uttermost," (Heb. vii. 25;) his great intention, that "he had come, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 15.)

This communication was thus acknowledged, "Your letter has made me weep much; but do not repent having written it, for the tears were the gentlest and kindest I ever shed. My heart is rivetted to that phrase, 'able to save to the uttermost.' (Heb. vii. 25.) I thank you, I thank you! for having shed balm on my wounds. I want to talk with you over my sorrows and my hopes; if you can believe that I ought to have any hope. Oh, yes, yes! I have indeed hope, although it is mingled with sorrow. But, mercy, mercy!"

After this the Countess had an interesting interview with her friend. She found that the Spirit had indeed begun the good work, and was gradually leading her mind into all truth. Grief and despair had given way to a strong anxiety to understand the word of God. This new study absorbed her whole soul; she said she

read it incessantly, and when she met with any difficulty, she uttered her first prayer, "O Lord, give me light, that I may know thee." "There," said she, "I often find more force, beauty, and information, in that which had confounded me, than in all I understood before." She said also, "This book is my nightly comfort, as well as my daily occupation. When I cannot sleep, my attendant brings me my book, and places the candle at my pillow; and so the night becomes no more tedious nor gloomy."

Attempts were made by her sister to lead her back to the darkness of infidel philosophy; but in vain. "The Lord was her keeper." She read the Bible, and loved to adorn its doctrine. Adversity was to her a rich blessing. The sorrow which bowed her down was in mercy to her soul. "God doth not afflict willingly." (Lam. iii. 33.) He doth it for "our profit." "He causeth us to pass under the rod, that he may bring us into the bond of his covenant." (Ezek. xx. 37.) Painful may be his discipline in the school of affliction; but it comes from the hand of love.

Reader, art thou in trouble? Has the stroke of affliction fallen on thee? Is there not a cause? Is thine heart acquainted with God as thy God? Knowest thou the riches of his grace, by a personal interest through faith in Jesus? Then he will teach thee more perfectly the lessons thou hast already begun to learn. He will manifest himself to thee more fully, and lead thee, with increased feeling, to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." (Psa. lxxiii. 25.)

Reader, art thou yet a stranger to all but the name of

Jesus; dost thou not know his preciousness to those who believe; hast thou not cast thyself at his feet, saying, "Lord, save me, or I perish;" but dost thou feel thy case to be desperate, and that thy troubled spirit needs rest? Oh, seek it in the way this narrative unfolds. Turn to the Scriptures. Read them as they may never have been read before. Adopt the petition, "O Lord, enlighten me by thy Spirit, that I may know thee." Yield, troubled spirit, yield to the hand that smites thee. Thy soul is provided for. "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

A lost and sinful world to save,
 In human form the Saviour came:
 He laid his glory by,
 To bear our sin and shame.
 A King,—he left for us his Father's throne,
 He came,—and was rejected by his own!

A man of sorrows and of grief,—
 Homeless,—in humble garb arrayed;
 A world's iniquity
 Was on his shoulders laid.
 Despised and poor,—he boundless riches gave;
 Stricken,—he came omnipotent to save.

But, oh to us how beautiful
 The feet of him, the Holy One:—
 Herald of endless peace
 To all beneath the sun!
 Himself how bruised!—he heals the sinner's pain;
 Nailed to the cross,—he bursts the sinner's chain!

Then be it sung,—
The incense of the heart to heaven!
Lord, let our daily praise
To thy great name be given!
In this frail scene, be thou our trust, our love;
Poor pilgrims here, we seek a home above.

THE TRANSPLANTED FLOWER.



THE garden of the Lord is filled with many a lovely and pleasant plant, each one trained and matured under his own watchful eye. And as they one by one bud, blossom, and bear fruit, he comes "down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." (Cant. vi. 2.) The beloved child, of whose short life the following is a brief narrative, bloomed not long in this sin-blighted world, but was early transplanted to a kindlier sphere, in the house of her Father and the bosom of her God.

Isabella — was born in Glasgow in the year 1827. Of her earliest years little more can be said than that she was a remarkably interesting child, of quick understanding, with a decision of manner and judgment, rarely observable in one so young. Being delicate from her infancy, and unable to engage in the active pursuits and pleasures so common to childhood, she was probably led to seek those of a more solid kind; for she early exhibited a thirst for knowledge, and was assiduous in the improvement of her time.

When seven years of age, she was seized with a glandular disease, which confined her to bed for a year,

during which period of continued suffering she was patient and submissive; though nothing occurred indicative of that change of heart, which afterwards was so remarkable. It pleased Him with whom are the issues of life and death, to raise her up again for a season, and to give her some measure of health; but when about ten years old, she fell into a languid and depressed state of mind, which filled her affectionate parents with anxiety. She lost all interest in the various studies which had formerly afforded her so much pleasure; and though naturally fond of society, she now avoided the company even of her own sisters. She was consequently removed from the nursery, and various efforts made for her amusement, but all seemed to be in vain. Little did those to whom she was such a cherished object of affection imagine, that her depression arose from a spiritual apprehension of her state as a sinner, and that a glorious work had been commenced in her young heart, by the Spirit of the living God. At this period her mother frequently observed the gas burning during the night, and put it out, without being aware that it was kept in, at the earnest request of her child. On one occasion, when the servant told her she was desired to put it out, the little girl exclaimed, "O Mary, do not! I am ashamed to tell mamma, but it is fear that makes me ask you to allow it to burn." On being asked of whom she was afraid, she replied, "Of none but Satan. I fear the Lord has given me up to him, and I am afraid he will appear to me." And occasionally that same night she would scream out, "Mary! there he is! cover me, cover me!" On this being mentioned to her mother, she thought it best to take no notice of it, but to watch her closely.

The following is given in her mother's own words. "Some days after this, finding me alone, she came with her Bible, and in much distress took a seat beside me. I said, 'Have you been reading, Isabella?' She looked at me, and replied, 'O mamma, I cannot read the Bible right, I cannot understand it. I cannot believe it. I cannot see Christ to be God. I only believe it because you tell me, and that is not believing at all. Oh! what shall I do? for I am miserable! I think I am lost. Satan wants to have me; and when I take up the Bible, he tells me it is useless.'

"In this distressed state she continued, and all administration of comfort was in vain. Having heard of Mr. Beith's little work, 'Successive Bereavements in a Minister's Family,' which had just been published, I procured it for her, and she eagerly sat down and read it through, appearing greatly encouraged by the account given of Matilda. On finishing it she said to me, 'It is only three weeks from the communion, and Dr. Macdonald will be here. Who knows but he may be the means of leading me to know Christ, as he was the means of leading Matilda Beith! From this time there seemed a ray of hope which supported her a little; but her bodily disease began to return, and, on the fast-day, instead of being able to attend the ordinances she had so anxiously looked forward to, she was confined to bed. She seemed greatly disappointed, but only said, 'I see I have been looking too much to Dr. Macdonald, instead of trying to look to Christ.'"

Thus early was this dear child taught not to lean upon an arm of flesh,—that there was but One who could give her rest. On Saturday she was better, and at her earnest

entreaty was allowed to go to church. Before leaving the house she threw her little head upon the bed, crying, "I can't believe! I don't believe! I do not know Christ!" Peculiarly striking under the circumstances was the passage Dr. Macdonald selected for his text; "Do ye now believe?" (John xvi. 31.) The following morning being the Sabbath, she asked permission to go to church in the evening, promising to lie on the sofa all day. Willingly was the request granted by her parents, who, anxious as they were regarding the bodily health of their beloved child, were still more solicitous about the health of her precious soul. The text that evening was, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." (John xvii. 20.) On Monday she was again able to be in church, and the subject was the same. That evening she retired to rest, expressing the hope that she might be able to attend the following day, when Dr. Macdonald was to conclude with these words, "That they all may be one." (John xvii. 21.) But the Lord's "thoughts are not as our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways," for Isabella was confined to the house from this time, and was rarely able to leave her bed. The trial to her was great, for there was a famine in her soul for the word of God. She was indeed hungering and thirsting for it, and the hour was not far distant when she was to be filled. In the mean time her soul was in bitterness. Her reserve was great, but "a wounded spirit who can bear?" (Prov. xviii. 14,) and occasionally she could not restrain her feelings. About this period she asked her mamma if she was quite alone, and on being answered in the affirmative, she exclaimed, "Oh! I am distressed, and I do not know what to do.

I can't believe; and Dr. Macdonald said, 'It does not matter whether you once believed, or will you yet believe, but, do you now believe?' Now I don't, and I can't believe. I do not know Christ."

"I stated," said her mother, "Christ's willingness to save, but she replied, 'Oh but I do not think he will save me. I see him—I see him—but his arms are folded and shut against me; and yet there is a passage of Scripture always standing before me as it were visible in large letters. It is not mine, and yet I cannot put it away. It is this, 'For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) And it was hers, though as yet she had not the sweet assurance of it. He who had convinced her of sin because of unbelief, was also convincing her of righteousness; though for many days she was in the depths, and from nothing could she derive comfort. She continually kept to the idea that the Saviour's arms were folded, and shut against her, and at other times she would say, 'I see Christ as a man; I don't see him to be God!' Portion after portion of the word of God was repeated to her in the way of encouragement, but all was unavailing, and those around her were constrained to feel that he who had smitten could alone heal."

It was during this season of mental anguish that the Rev. Dr. Duncan called. He was requested by her mother to see Isabella, and was previously informed of the state of her mind, while at the same time the desire was expressed that he would endeavour to draw it from

herself. When her reserve was in some measure broken through, and her confidence gained by this servant of the Lord, she gave vent to her burdened heart, in the oft-reiterated complaint, "Ah, but I don't know Christ to be God." In a most interesting and clear manner Dr. Duncan took the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, showing how completely they agreed with the fulfilment in the New; stating, that God could not have so honoured a mere impostor, and that this Jesus was none other than the Christ of God. It was a long and deeply interesting conversation, and the intelligent eye of the youthful inquirer was fixed upon her kind instructor, portraying the whole soul in exercise. The conversation ended, the question was put, "Isabella, what shall I ask the Lord for you?" "A sight of Christ," was the short but comprehensive answer. It was the prayer of faith which ascended to the mercy-seat that day, and the answer was not far distant. It was no common interest which was excited in Dr. Duncan's mind on behalf of this dear child—an interest which continued until the day of her death. Her attachment to him was likewise very great, and she seldom spoke of him but as her beloved minister.

A day or two after Dr. Duncan's visit, Isabella appeared much better, and was lively and cheerful, interested in her sisters, and enjoyed their being with her. The change was so great in her aspect and manner altogether, that her mother felt at a loss what construction to put upon it, almost fearing lest her concern regarding eternal things should be wearing off. On the following Sabbath morning she was very happy; but on her mother's return from church in the afternoon, she found her

weeping. In reply to the inquiry "was she worse?" the child replied, "No, mamma, but the doctor has been here, and he said I was better, and thought I might be removed to the country. It is this that grieves me, for I do not wish to get better."

"And why do you not wish to recover?" asked her mother. "Oh," she replied, "if I was to get better and return to school and my companions, I am afraid I should lose the sweet thoughts I have had of Christ." This explained the cause of her cheerfulness; and when her mamma said, "You did not tell me you had had any discoveries of Christ," the following was her simple and beautiful reply,—"I was afraid to speak of them lest I should lose them, but on Thursday morning dear grand-papa was speaking to me of the love of Christ, and of his willingness to embrace such as I am; that his arms were open, never shut; and while he was speaking I beheld Christ with his arms open. I ran to him and felt that they were open. I felt him embracing me; I now feel that they are open; if I die, they are open; and oh! I should like to die!"

"The prey had been taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive had been delivered." (Isa. xlix. 24.) Satan, however, sought to harass and perplex where he could not destroy, and Isabella had her seasons of temptation, though she came off "more than conqueror," through him who had loved her with an everlasting love. One Sabbath, for instance, she was in deep distress; she could not rest, nor take the requisite nourishment for her weak frame, for her experience was like that of the apostle when he cried, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" (Rom. vii.

24.) She would cry, "My sins! my sins! I see them like mountains." The inward conflict was great; known only to God and herself; but in a short time a blessed calm appeared to succeed the storm, and lying down she exclaimed, "I see it, I have got it; 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'" (2 Cor. xii. 9.)

The word of God was her heritage, her chosen companion, her never-failing counsellor. Truly it was the joy and the rejoicing of her heart. It was therefore no matter of surprise that she grew in grace,—that the bud which gave promise of so much, so rapidly burst into a flower. The Psalmist has left on record the following experience, "I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried; I hoped in thy word. Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate on thy word." Such was Isabella's also, and she would never leave a portion of that word until she was satisfied that she had got something of the Spirit's mind out of it. Each day she selected a subject for meditation, very often confining herself to one verse, but Rom. viii., 2 Cor. v., the sufferings of Christ as related by John,—his 1st Epistle,—and the last two chapters of the Revelation, were portions which she almost daily requested to be read. On one occasion she asked her mother the meaning of Rev. xxii. 1, 2, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." On being asked how she understood it herself, she replied, "I am not satisfied with my own

views, but I will give you them. 'In the midst of the street, and on either side of the river was the tree of life.' This I understand to be Christ with his one arm supporting heaven, and his other arm supporting earth. The fruit, the new wonders which open up continually to the redeemed in heaven, and the redeemed on earth;" adding, "when Mrs. B—— comes (an advanced Christian friend to whom she was much attached) she will explain it."

There were days, however, in which her sufferings were such that she could neither read herself, nor listen to reading. At other times, she would lie for days as if in slumber. "Her soul," says her mother, "was brought into such near communion with her God, that everything else was as nothing, and her eyes were kept shut for fear of being disturbed. On one such occasion, when for nearly two days she had not spoken, she requested her dear mother, who was watching by her, to lie down on the bed beside her. On her doing so, she said, "You thought, mamma, that I was sleeping these two days, but no; they were the sweetest I have ever enjoyed on earth. I have been meditating on glory, and on my entrance into heaven, and I thought first of my meeting Christ, and his introducing me to his Father, but now I know that I shall see the Father, the Son, and the blessed Spirit, all wrapt together;" adding, with such a look as will not soon be forgotten, "I have not had one thought of this world for two days."

Her love for the Sabbath was very great, and she longed for its return, when she would say, "It is the shortest day of the week to me, and I never feel weary till it is past." Often did she speak to those around of the preciousness of the day of rest. It was to her a

delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable. One Sabbath morning, when the family were leaving the house for church, she called her elder sister to her and said, "I will give you a passage to take to church with you: 'Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools.'" (Eccles. v. 1.) And in answer to a remark made afterwards regarding it, she said, "I did not understand it until one Sabbath in church, when I was looking at a piece of dress. It struck me powerfully that I was offering the sacrifice of a fool. From that time I have kept hold of the passage."

On another Sabbath, when in great suffering of body, seeing the fifty-eighth paraphrase, she repeated it aloud with great emphasis, and seemed so overpowered with it as to forget her pain. The beautiful hymn referred to is given at length here, as to some who read this little narrative it may be unknown.

"Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God, not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Guardian of mankind appears.

"He who for men their Surety stood,
And poured on earth his precious blood,
Pursues in heaven his mighty plan,
The Saviour and the Friend of man.

"Though now ascended up on high,
He bends on earth a brother's eye;
Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame.

“Our fellow-sufferer yet retains
A fellow-feeling of our pains ;
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, his agonies, and cries.

“In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of Sorrows had a part ;
He sympathizes in our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.

“With boldness, therefore, at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known ;
And ask the aid of heavenly power,
To help us in the evil hour.”

One ardent desire she had, in submission to the will of God, that she might be permitted to sit down at the table of the Lord, thus publicly to declare that she was His who had bought her with his blood. This measure of bodily strength the Lord did not, however, see fit to grant. In spiritual strength she seemed to grow daily, not only in her knowledge of the glorious person and work of Christ, but also in the conviction of the inward depravity of her own heart, and she watched its workings very closely. Sin, or the approach to it, with this heaven-taught child, was indeed an evil and a bitter thing, and the following apparently trivial circumstance is related as an evidence of her peculiarly tender conscience.

Notwithstanding the remonstrances of her attendant, Isabella one night insisted on casting off her bed-clothes. So unlike her usually willing compliance with what was desired of her was this, that her mother could hardly believe it to be true ; but fearing a recurrence of the same conduct, so hazardous to her weak and delicate

frame, she immediately, on being informed of it, reproved her. The child made no reply, but looked very sad, and each time her mother entered the room she found her in tears. She took no food, and the agony of her countenance was such, that she was asked whether having been reproved distressed her, or if she was suffering pain. To this question she merely replied that she was not worse, and that it was kind of her mamma to reprove her. "But the following day," says her mother, "I was alone with her, it being the Sabbath; and she then gave vent to her distracted mind, as sitting up in bed she wrung her little hands, screaming out, 'What shall I do? It is not your reproof, my dear mamma, that distresses me—it is my sin. I have grieved the Holy Spirit, and Christ hath withdrawn himself from me. There is nothing in the world worth living for without him, and I cannot live without him!' At this moment we were interrupted, and as I had to leave the room, her aunt coming in, found her in the same distracted state. 'Isabella,' said she, 'did you not tell me last Sabbath that you could appropriate to yourself the first verse of the 116th Psalm, and that it was the sweetest verse in all the Bible to you?' 'I love the Lord,' and the reason was, because he had heard your voice and your supplication. He is the same still,—as willing now as then to hear. 'I do not doubt,' she answered, 'my interest in Christ—that is secure, but I have sinned, and I have not his presence, and I cannot live without it.'"

"I may remark," continues her mother, "that relief invariably came from some portion of God's word. For instance, at one time being in deep distress for about a

week, I thought it arose from bodily suffering. Suddenly her countenance brightened, and she seemed happy. The following day she said, 'I have had a sore conflict with Satan, but I have got the victory.' I asked her to tell me how it had been obtained. 'I did all that I could to resist him,' was her reply, 'but he tried to reason me out of Christ—that it was too late now, with many such fiery darts. At last I said to Christ, Thou hast said, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James iv. 7.) Now, Lord, I have done all that I can, and I now give him into thy hands. I felt him leave me—I saw him leave me—and Christ is with me!'"

The Sabbath before she died, her sufferings were very great, and she longed to be freed from a body of sin and death. Dr. Duncan repeated, at her request, that portion of the 23d Psalm—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Before engaging in prayer on her behalf, she asked him to pray that Jesus would soon come. He prayed that she might have the spirit of Paul, so that if it was more needful for her to abide in the flesh she might be made willing. Her great fear was for the assaults of Satan, but she was assured that she would not be tempted above that she was able to bear. The following day she was rather better, and though on Tuesday and Wednesday she appeared to sleep, was wrapt in holy meditation. Her grandmother coming in, said, "I would not allow that child to sleep so much, but read to her now and then." Isabella, when she left the room, turned round and said, "Grandmamma thought I was sleeping, but I

have not slept for two days, and only kept my eyes shut, lest I should be disturbed. I have now got to these words, 'It is finished,' and I am now made willing to recover." Her mamma asked her what had made her willing. "Ah!" she replied, "it was these words, 'And they spat upon him and reviled him.' I wonder I could ever have doubted his being God, suppose there had been no more, and I now wish, if it is his will, that I should be spared a little while to glorify him, and to crucify the flesh."

Anxious to know what she understood by crucifying the flesh, the question was put to her. The explanation given may by some be thought little to the point, but if the tender age of her who gave it be remembered, and how jealously she watched the workings of her heart, it affords a beautiful specimen at once of the simplicity of the child, and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. "You know," she said, "that I have by nature a very proud spirit, and to-day I tried to crucify it—I shall tell you how. The black currants you gave me were very nice; I asked nurse to put them on a plate beside me, which she did, but on doing so, she took some herself. My proud spirit rose at her taking them without asking me, and I told her she ought not to do so. She threw them down and left the room. I felt it was pride in me that had made me reprove her, and that I must crucify it; so I watched her return, and again and again I begged her to take some without her even acknowledging it, but I continued every opportunity of asking her till she did, and I felt that I was crucifying the flesh."

Another portion of God's word, which much delighted

her at this time, was Luke xxiv. 13-35, the disciples going to Emmaus,—and it is well remembered the way in which she said, “Oh! I have often known their experience, for I did not know what I had, till he had withdrawn.”

The nurse, when doing something for her, remarked, “Those legs are little more than skin and bone.” She looked at them and said, “Yes, but he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, (Phil. ii. 6,) took this nature upon him.” Many a solemn warning, as well as precious admonition, she gave to this servant, the result of which will only be known in eternity. The end was now drawing near. Her eye was changed, and she suffered from excessive weakness. On being told that a friend was in the house to whom she was much attached, and being asked if she would like to see him, she quietly said, “Tell him to come ere I cross the river.” Her mother was alarmed at this, not thinking the hour of separation from her beloved child was so close at hand, and as she wiped the heavy drops of perspiration from her brow, remarked that it was great suffering. “What,” she exclaimed, “is my suffering to Christ’s? He sweat great drops of blood.”

Speaking of the valley of the shadow of death, with the greatest calmness she said, “I have entered it;” and when it was remarked that it was a dark valley, she replied, “It would be dark without Christ, but he is going before, and it looks very bright.”

“Have you any fear?” asked her mother.

“Do not think, mamma, that I am leaning upon anything that I have said or done for salvation. It is

Christ's imputed righteousness alone that I lean upon. I see such efficacy in one drop of his blood, that I know it is not only able to save me, but a world of sinners."

She then requested the following message to be given to her sisters,—“I have often,” said she, “tried to speak to them, but cannot do it now. Tell them not to leave off seeking Christ to a dying-bed. My Bible tells me of only one that found him at the eleventh hour. Tell them,” she continued, “that if they do not seek Christ, we can never spend eternity together, and that if they knew the sweetness of being in him for one hour, they would not be another moment without him.” Then looking at her dear mother, she said, “I should be sorry to leave you and papa, if I was not going to Jesus, but ‘be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.’” Isabella had a quiet and comfortable night after this, and slept till the following forenoon, when, suddenly turning, she cried out, “Quick! quick!” and added, “It is Christ I want.” The expression of her countenance was beautiful. Seeing the nurse weeping, she exclaimed, “Oh! Mary, do not weep for me. I am fast going to Jesus, but make sure for a dying-bed, for it will try profession.”

After saying this, she seemed in close intercourse with the unseen world. No word was distinguishable but “God.” Her bright eye was fixed above with a look of holy triumph. It was a solemn yet blessed season. None liked to break the stillness, and all experienced that the Lord was present in that chamber of death. It was, as has been beautifully said, “the robing-room of heaven.” Within five minutes of her spirit's flight, the

dying child was in such ecstasy as is indescribable. Springing up with outstretched arms, she exclaimed, "Christ is now come! Christ is now come!"

Her father said, "Christ seems very precious to you." She distinctly replied "Yes," and with the same breath, her happy spirit winged its way into Immanuel's bosom, to be for ever with the Lord; aged eleven years and four months.

She is gone! she is gone! A God of love
Has called her up to his side above;
Has gathered the flower in all its prime,
And bade it bloom in a brighter clime;
Has filled her hand with a heavenly lyre,
And found her a place in his angel choir.

She is gone! she is gone to a land of light,
Where the glorious day ne'er sinks in night;
Where a cloud ne'er comes across the sky;
Where the tears are wiped from every eye;
Where all is holiness, love and bliss,
And none regret such a world as this.

She is gone! she is gone! She passed away
Like the dying close of a summer day;
A dawn of glory around her shone,
A light shot down from the heavenly throne;
The last of her breath in song was spent
And forth in a smile her spirit went.

She is gone! she is gone! And who would chain
Her soul to a world like ours again?
But oh! the blank, the desolate void,
In hearts that her converse here enjoyed!
They long from all upon earth to sever,
And be with their loved and lost for ever.

She is gone! she is gone but a while before;
She waits for them at the heavenly door;
They hear her calling them up on high;
They feel her drawing them on to the sky;
And pray at their parting hour to be
As ripe, as ready, as blest as she.

NARRATIVE OF JAMES ———.

“It is the Spirit that quickeneth.”

IN the summer of 1831, when residing in the neighbourhood of Liverpool, I was one morning told that a poor woman wished to see me. Being engaged, and feeling that I had as many poor people to visit as my time admitted of, I desired she might be sent away. On second thoughts, I reflected it might be a case of urgency, and went myself to the door. There I found a poor widow, whose tale was brief. She had an only son, who worked as a carter at the docks. One of his fellow-labourers, James ———, a poor orphan lad from the south, without friends, had sought a lodging with the widow and her son. He was received; but in a few weeks his delicate constitution gave way. A cough and extreme weakness obliged him to give up work, and all means of supporting himself were cut off. I dismissed the poor woman with a promise that I would visit her abode.

Agreeably to this promise I went. On entering the cellar, for such it was, my eye immediately caught the object of my visit, James —, an emaciated lad of about sixteen, who was seated by the fire. His pale and haggard countenance too plainly told that his earthly course

was nearly ended; and when I heard his hollow cough, I felt grieved that I had not sooner been able to offer some little relief. He was alone in the house. When I addressed him, a vacant stare, and a kind of groan, was all the answer I obtained. He appeared to me the most uncivilised person I had ever beheld. His speech was almost unintelligible to me. I gathered, by dint of close questioning, that he was a native of Somersetshire,—had lost his parents before he knew them,—was brought up a stable boy, and had actually lived among the horses. All days had been alike to him; he had never entered a place of worship, never heard of a Sabbath, or even of a God,—in fact, he was ignorant as the beasts that perish. My heart sunk within me as I thought of his condition, and felt how little hope there appeared of imparting the knowledge of Jesus to his darkened soul; for life seemed to hang by so slender a thread, that a few days, in all probability, would terminate it. My unbelieving heart led me to doubt the possibility of saying a word to profit his soul, and I was almost tempted to refrain, lest I should add to his condemnation. But he who bears with his people's infirmities, and whose thoughts and ways are not as ours, led me to see my error, and to trust him in whose hand are the issues of life, "and who willeth not the death of a sinner."

There was a dog lying on the floor beside us. I asked James if he thought there would be any difference between the state of that dog and himself at death? "No," said he, in an indifferent and unmeaning tone. I opened my Bible, and felt very deep responsibility; what important words shall I read? The time is short and very momentous. Had it been a child I had to deal with, I

should have felt the difficulty less, but this soil was so barren and rugged, and so choked with thorns, that it appeared quite impenetrable. After saying a few words, and seeking internally the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who alone could enable me to speak "a word in season," I read the first chapter of Genesis, and told him of God as our Creator—of man's fall, and the Lord's goodness in providing a Redeemer; then spoke to him of the Saviour, his life and death, and present intercession; and then I tried to inform him of the Divine attributes, God's sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.

After sitting upwards of an hour, and leaving some relief for his poor suffering body, I left him with a sorrowful heart, for I feared he was too weak in mind and body to comprehend the truths I had endeavoured to impart.

Circumstances called me from home for a few days, and my mind was so much occupied with a scene of distress, as to remove this poor young man from my thoughts. The first intelligence I received on my return home was, that the widow had been several times, with great importunity, to say that James could not rest day or night, so anxious was he to see the lady, and hear her read again. Oh, with what joy did I receive this message! I hoped that the Lord had indeed sown his good seed in this barren soil, and would bless the means, and graciously enable me to make known the glad tidings of salvation to a perishing fellow-sinner.

I hastened to the cellar. On opening the door I was greeted by a smile of pleasure, instead of the vacant stare which had so struck me before. Now the emaciated countenance brightened up with a gleam of intelligence and joy; he looked at me with beseeching earnestness,

as if he hoped to hear something more of God and a future state. I could hardly believe it was the same face. I felt that the Spirit of God had been shining into his hitherto darkened soul, and was leading him by a way he knew not. The poor woman told me he had been longing much for my arrival, anxious to hear more of what I had read and said to him; and that he had been in a most restless, uncomfortable state, suffering far more in mind than in body. As neither the widow nor her son could read, and they, too, seemed without friends, he had received no instruction during the interval of my first and second visit, (a week or more,) but being alone almost the whole day, he had had time to ponder over what he had heard. I felt no doubt that the Spirit of God had been striving with him, and teaching him the depravity of his heart, and the holiness of God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord;" and surely never was this truth more forcibly brought to my mind. It was evident he had been very unhappy, and very anxious about his soul. Some persons may be disposed to doubt the possibility of such a change, in so short a time, from a state of the grossest ignorance, and utmost indifference, to be awakened to a sense of his danger, and eager to know "what he must do to be saved." Oh! let us not limit the power of God. "The natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned;" his ways are unsearchable, and past finding out. I believe it was well for James, and also for myself, that I was prevented visiting him during this week. He had no human teaching whatever during that period, and I saw and acknowledged the sovereign

grace of God, and rendered the undivided glory to him to whom alone it was due.

I asked him a few questions, and was astonished to find how deeply he had drunk in all I had said. He seemed already to feel the love of God in Christ; especially when I repeated to him that verse—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He felt himself a great sinner, but that Christ had died to save him from hell. His life seemed ebbing fast—I felt that I had no time to lose—he was eager for instruction—truly it was a hungering and thirsting after righteousness such as I had never before witnessed. He spoke very little, as his cough and difficulty of breathing made it an effort, so that sometimes I could scarcely judge how far I had succeeded in making him understand the simplest truths. But the deep anxiety and earnestness of his looks, for me to go on, was sufficient encouragement, and I endeavoured, as clearly and simply as I could, to impart to him a knowledge of the glorious scheme of redemption. I began by reading some of the early chapters in Genesis, and a few in the gospels relating to our Saviour's birth, and also the 53d and 54th of Isaiah; and it was indeed delightful to witness the riveted attention with which he listened to every word of God.

I had the privilege of visiting this poor lad every day during the remainder of his life, which was mercifully lengthened out six weeks after I first saw him; and he became so impatient for my daily visits, that I believe he would have listened all day, could I have remained, and

frequently I went both morning and evening. He soon began to feel the value and importance of prayer, and often, when asked if he did not find his sleepless nights very wearisome, he replied, "I pray to God to take away all my sins, and to make me patient." During these six weeks, I had the privilege of reading to him all the parables of our Lord, his miracles, and most of John's gospel, many chapters in Isaiah and the Epistles, and several of the Psalms. The journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, and the account of the brazen serpent, struck him much. In this, and other instances, I have found that simple narrative is the easiest way of conveying to the mind a view of the atonement through Christ. Every day I perceived a change in the mind of this interesting lad; he was evidently growing rapidly in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was most encouraging to see his earnest desire to know more of God, and of his dear Son, and I was always welcomed with a smile of gratitude and joy. He seemed to feel, and often spoke of the love of God to him, in sending me to tell him of a Saviour—and all he received, he acknowledged was from the Lord.

His temporal wants were daily supplied through the kindness of some friends, and a few little children denied themselves their dessert of fruit, in order to send this refreshment to the dying lad, who always received it most gratefully, and thanked God for caring for him.

Owing to his increased weakness and incessant cough, it was with difficulty he spoke, but all he said was a convincing proof that the love of God was shed abroad in his heart. Besides the Bible, I read several tracts to him,

for I wished him to see the practical effect of Christianity in supporting others in similar circumstances. Legh Richmond's "Little Jane," "The History of Susan Ward," and several others, which I do not now recollect, interested him very much. His knowledge of the plan of salvation became remarkably clear. He received the truth in genuine simplicity, and embraced Jesus as his Saviour and Redeemer. Truly it was through the teaching of that Holy Spirit who has promised to guide us into all truth.

I cannot recollect all the conversations that passed between us, but every day I felt he was growing in meetness for that "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." He had the pleasure of two visits from a faithful minister of Christ, the first he had ever seen; and he felt his prayers very comforting and supporting.

A day or two before his departure, I put a few questions to him, to satisfy myself that he clearly knew in whom he believed, and in order that the poor woman, who administered so kindly to his temporal wants out of her penury, should also have an opportunity of seeing the value of an immortal soul, and the plan God has provided for its salvation. The last few days she was present during my visits, and listened with apparent interest to the word of God. She was very ignorant, and, like many poor people, had an idea, that because she suffered so much here from poverty and other trials, there would be perfect happiness and rest for her in heaven—fatal delusion! I was thankful to be able to show her the error of such an opinion, and that the word of God gives war-

rant for no such conclusion. "The wages of sin is death," and "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." In answer to the question, "Are you happy in the prospect of death?" he said, "Oh yes, ma'am, very, very happy, for I shall live with God and Christ, and all who love him." "What has God done for you?" "He made me, and gives me every thing I have, and he sent you to tell me of Jesus." "What has Christ done for you?" He said with great animation, "He died on the cross for me, to save me from hell, and has taken away all my sins." "And what has God the Holy Spirit done for you?" "He came into my heart, and washed it in Christ's blood, and he will make me holy, and fit me to live with God for ever." Many other things he said, which most satisfactorily showed that "Christ was all and in all to him," and that he trusted not in any righteousness of his own, but simply in that divine Saviour who had died, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He often spoke of himself as a great sinner, and greatly did he mourn over his past life, all spent without God and without Christ in the world; but he felt and spoke with great thankfulness of the love and mercy of God, in not suffering him to die in his sins.

His anxiety for the poor widow and her son was great. He prayed most earnestly that the Lord would bless them and reward them for their care of him, and that he would be pleased to make them believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved, and to give them new hearts to love and serve God.

My last interview was a very solemn, yet most com-

forting one. His strength was nearly exhausted, but his countenance brightened up when we spoke of the joys at God's right hand, and he listened with deep attention and delight while I read the last two chapters of the Revelation, and the 23d Psalm. In taking leave, he said he hoped we would meet at the throne of God, and for ever sing his praises. I felt we should meet no more till that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and I was amazed at the love and power of God, in producing such a change in the soul.

James slept in Jesus a few hours after I left him. The widow told me he spent his last night in praying for her, for her son, and for me, and exhorted his companion "to seek the Lord while he might be found."

As I gazed upon his lifeless remains, I could not help adoring the wonderful grace of God in calling this uneducated and neglected orphan from darkness unto light, "from the power of Satan unto God." What a lesson I have learned, "not to be faithless but believing." "With God all things are possible." We should never despair of the greatest sinner, but use all the means in our power to lead him to that Saviour, who will "save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by him."

Reader, what is the impression this narrative has produced on your mind? Doubtless you are astonished to think that in this highly-favoured land, an individual should have lived for sixteen years in such complete darkness, as to be totally ignorant of the being of a God, or of a future state. It is indeed a melancholy fact. But let us acknowledge the infinite mercy of God in being pleased, even at the eleventh hour, to bring this wander-

ing sheep into his fold. By the Spirit's teaching, and the reading of his holy word, "which is able to make wise unto salvation," he led this poor lad to a simple, confiding trust in the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

Consider that if your privileges have been greater than were those of poor James, your responsibilities are more. Perhaps you have sat for years under the sound of the gospel, the Bible has been in your possession from early childhood, the plan of salvation has been clearly pointed out to you! And what has been the result? Have you fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel? Are you a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ? And is his word a light unto your feet, and a lamp unto your path? Or are you still living without God and without Christ in the world? The hour is fast approaching when we shall all have to answer for every opportunity of grace we have had here. "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Let every Christian reader of this narrative reflect on his responsibility in the sight of God. Each has in some degree influence over others, and the smallest effort made for Christ's sake, and in humble dependence on him, will be accepted by him who has said, "a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, shall in nowise lose its reward." True, it is not in our power to change the heart, nor even to implant one good thought, but God works by means, and often honours the very weakest instrument, that all the glory may be his. Let none despair of opportunities of usefulness; "acknowledge God in all thy ways, and he will direct thy paths." If

you have indeed tasted and felt that the Lord is gracious, and has revealed himself to you as your God and Father in Christ, O use your influence in proclaiming his love to those around you; and while feeling the value of your own soul, be not unmindful of the souls of others. "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil. ii. 4.)

REMARKABLE DREAM.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK CHALMERS.

“In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instructions, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.”—JOB xxxiii. 15-17.

WHAT more evanescent than a dream! and frequently what more dependent on the trifles of the day! A dream cometh by the multitude of business. And yet, in this as in other things, he that observes providences shall never want providences to observe. When a dream warns of the emptiness of earthly things, and points the soul to heaven,—when a dream humbles self, and points the sinner to the cross of Christ,—when a dream speaks with a voice of thunder to the startled conscience, “awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,” (Eph. v. 14,) it is often a note of kindly warning, an accent of sweet and loving invitation, which should be listened to with holy awe, and followed with prayerful self-examination. “The wise man feareth and departeth from evil, but the fool rageth and is confident.” (Prov. xiv. 16.)

A remarkable instance of the good effects of attention to a dream has reached the writer from a source of un-

questionable authority. It is but a few years since, that an honoured servant of God, the Rev. Dr. Marsh, formerly of St. Peter's, Colchester, was at a well-known watering-place with several members of his family, and, having a respite from his own labours of love, attended the morning service in the beautiful old church. He asked for a seat, and was shown by one of the vergers into a large pew with eight or ten other worshippers. Engrossed with the service, he did not remark that he was the object of occasionally intense observation from a lady of interesting appearance, who was sitting next to one of his daughters, and who seemed to be endeavouring to suppress some overwhelming emotion; and at length, during the pause between the prayers and the sermon, as if unable longer to control her feelings, she whispered in his daughter's ear, "May I ask if that is Dr. Marsh who was formerly at Colchester?" She was answered in the affirmative; and then earnestly begged permission for a few minutes' conversation with him after the sermon was concluded.

The request was communicated, and of course granted, and Dr. Marsh was not a little surprised to be accosted by the stranger in words to the following effect: "I have indeed to apologize for my boldness in seeking this interview, and for the manner in which my attention was riveted upon you during the service. I am a stranger in the place, and a stranger to you, except that I once heard you speak at a public meeting for the Bible Society. Last night, however, I had a remarkable dream, which left a peculiar impression on my mind, and which I mentioned to my family at the breakfast-table this morning. I dreamt I was in a strange church, that I was shown

into the same pew with you, and that you spoke to me some words which were very consolatory to my mind. Judge, therefore, of my surprise and emotion when I found myself only separated from you by your daughter at this morning's service, especially as I did not know that you were in this part of the country."

The incident seemed extraordinary; and Dr. Marsh, thinking that the hand of God might be in the matter, invited the lady to join his domestic circle at family worship in the evening. She readily assented to the proposal, and arrived about half an hour before the time fixed for the assembling of the little circle around the family altar, when she was asked to retire into another room, in order that she might renew more unreservedly the subject of the morning's communication.

She then informed Dr. M., that at the meeting of the Bible Society, already referred to, she had been much impressed by some remarks he had made, on the necessity of the prayerful and constant study of the Holy Scriptures; and that she had for a season attended to his recommendations, and had found great benefit from their observance; but that subsequently she had accompanied her family to the Continent, had been drawn into much gaiety and frivolity, and laying aside gradually the habit of secret prayer and the perusal of the word of God, she had in proportion lost the cheering rays of peace and comfort which had begun to dawn upon her soul. This avowal was listened to with interest and sympathizing compassion, and she was urged to an immediate return to the throne of grace, to the word of grace, to the God of grace, with an assurance that he who hath said, "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unright-

eous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon," (Isa. lv. 7,) would be found faithful to his own invitations and promises, which are all "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." She seemed comforted by the manner in which the Saviour was set before her as the hope of the backslider and the wanderer, — declared that she now felt that there was a motive for giving up the world and living to God,—and they then rejoined the family party.

Having in private directed the attention of the stranger to the encouraging features of the gospel, Dr. Marsh, like a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, chose for the subject of the evening reading, a portion of the 5th chapter of 2 Corinthians, and dwelt with especial emphasis and solemnity on the words, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." She listened with much attention to his expository remarks, joined with earnestness in the concluding prayer, and, on taking leave, said to him, "This will be a memorable day in the history of my life."

She was, at the time of this interview, in the prime of health, and left the watering-place the next day without a further opportunity of meeting with the clergyman or any of his family, into whose society she had thus so providentially and unexpectedly been thrown. It will, no doubt, surprise our readers, as it struck those who had so recently held intercourse with her at —, to learn, that in two or three short weeks after the events we have narrated, she was in her grave! This solemn event was communicated by a relative of the deceased to another daughter of Dr. Marsh's, who alluded, in mentioning it,

to the conversation which had so remarkably occurred. She had been suddenly seized with croup, and died after a very short illness, but not before she had an opportunity of confessing her faith in Christ crucified, and of expressing her confidence in the efficacy of his atoning blood, and all-prevailing righteousness.

Reader, quench not the Spirit! Your own heart knows what special warnings the Lord in his mercy may have vouchsafed to you. This little history is another voice which tells you, "do not trifle." Trifle not with time—trifle not with opportunities—trifle not with convictions—trifle not with eternity. She whose end is recorded, gave timely heed to the voice of mercy, after having for a season disregarded it; she sought and obtained the assurance of pardon and acceptance; and she departed confiding in it, thanking God for the remarkable interposition which had arrested her in her course of thoughtlessness, by bringing her to the saving knowledge of the Redeemer,—and thus she "being dead yet speaketh."

THE FINGER OF GOD.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK CHALMERS,

Incumbent of South Malling, Sussex, and Chaplain to the Earl of Carnwath.

THE conversation in a family circle recently turned upon a feature among German writers, which might be characterized as the love of the marvellous, and which, in the opinion of some present, extended even to those writings which approached the nearest to the sobriety of Christian biography.

I was led to remark that I thought, if the observation were correct,—it might partly be accounted for by the circumstance of the imagination of German divines and Christians being really more alive to the peculiar and providential interposition of the hand of our heavenly Father; and thus, faith being more in exercise on occasions which to us would not appear to justify its operation,—more marked and visible indications of the Lord's wondrous power and love would be traceable among them.

The association of ideas immediately after this remark brought to my recollection some striking incidents in the history of a family of German extraction, with whom I had been intimately acquainted at the Cape of Good Hope, and of the authenticity of the greater part of

which incidents, I had from my own personal knowledge been fully assured.

Among the earlier professors of vital godliness in that colony, contemporaneous with Vanderkemp the celebrated missionary, was an old lady named Madame S—, who had brought up a family of several children, after having been left a widow at an early age, and by her exemplary piety, earnest devotedness, and simple faith, manifested that she was one whom the apostle would have described as a “widow indeed, trusting in God, and continuing in supplication and prayers night and day.”

Among her children was a son to whom she was peculiarly and ardently attached; he was her first-born, a child of many prayers; but at the time the writer became acquainted with him in 183—, there was no mark or indication observable to the eye of man, that he was not, rather one born after the flesh, than, as Isaac was, a child of the promise. The mother’s confidence was however steadfast concerning him, for “against hope she believed in hope;” and thus, like faithful Abraham, “being strong in faith, she gave glory to God.” During his early life, Valentine S— had exemplified much amiability and gentleness, but the very yieldingness of his disposition rendered him more easily misled by thoughtless companions, and there was no evidence that the seed of grace had as yet been sown in his heart. On one occasion his mother’s trust in her Saviour’s love was powerfully and severely tried. Valentine was on board a vessel bound for one of the more northern parts of the colony, and a few days after she had sailed, some of those heavy gales not unfrequent in that part of the ocean occurred, and the sad tidings of several wrecks reached

Cape Town. Among others mentioned, was the name of the vessel in which Valentine had sailed, backed with the mournful intelligence that every soul on board had perished. Several families were thrown into mourning, and friends came to condole with Madame S— upon the loss of her eldest son. Maternal tenderness was of course anxiously awakened, and she received with Christian sweetness and thankfulness the expressions of sympathy and condolence which were offered; but she could not mourn. She knew the earnestness of her prayers for the son of her love; she had not seen them answered in his conversion to the knowledge and reception of the truth as it is in Jesus, and she felt irresistibly persuaded, that somehow or other that son would be preserved. She could not conceal her impression, but disclosed it to several of her relatives, who could not (so circumstantial were the calamitous details,) find any grounds for a participation in her hopes,—when, to the surprise of all, and the overflowing gratitude of the faithful mother, after the lapse of a few more days, intelligence was received that Valentine S— had been picked up at sea, from a fragment of the wreck, by some fishermen, and landed at an unfrequented spot on the coast, an almost if not entirely solitary exception to the destruction which had overwhelmed the rest of the hapless crew!

Years after this event passed on, yet no change appeared to have taken place in Valentine S—. He had obtained various responsible situations under government, and had maintained great respectability of character, till at length he was sent to a post of some independence in the interior. Here, however, his easiness of disposition and want of firmness betrayed him into serious difficulty:

he was induced to trust too much to the honesty of others, a defalcation in the government funds ensued for which he became responsible, the greater part of his private property was sacrificed, and his health and spirits beginning to decline, he retired upon a moderate pension to the vicinity of Cape Town, where he hired a small house, and with his wife, a friend, and an only son, lived in comparative obscurity in the immediate neighbourhood of a nice estate that had once been in his own possession, but had now passed into other hands, in consequence of his former difficulties.

Affairs were in this position, when the writer of this narrative became acquainted with the family. Mr. S— was about sixty years of age, and bore the aspect of a disappointed man. He would occasionally converse with some interest on subjects connected with his former employment, but there was frequently a regretful allusion to his once more prosperous condition, and the hopes and consolations of the gospel seemed, notwithstanding early associations, distasteful to him. His venerable parent was still living, though far advanced in years; Mr. S— sometimes alluded to her great age, but seldom made any mention of her fervent piety, for it seemed as if conscience rendered silence more desirable to him upon that portion of her character.

A few months afterwards she was taken ill, and it was evident that the hand of death was upon her—a fruitless victory to that king of terrors. Mr. S— made occasional visits to the town to sit beside her dying bed, and heard, with other members of the family, her peaceful hopes, her gracious exhortations, her affectionate and tender expressions of regard. In him however they

seemed to call forth no other emotions than those of natural grief at the prospect of an early separation from so exemplary a parent. Her illness, and the heavenly state of her mind, were casually mentioned at this time to an officer in the army who was in the habit of calling upon Mr. S—, and had several times attempted to converse with him on religious subjects; and this gentleman was invited by one of the family to endeavour to see her at her residence in town, with the assurance that he would receive a welcome, and although he was unacquainted either with the Dutch or German languages, no doubt was entertained that the intercourse through an interpreter would be mutually satisfactory.

Captain — took an early opportunity of paying the visit; he was asked into the chamber of Madame S—, and after some conversation on the happy state of her mind, was invited to pray by her bedside, which he did, and withdrew. As he left the room, the old lady exclaimed, “That is the blessed man who is to be made the instrument of calling my dear son Valentine to the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” She seemed to grasp the thought with firmness and comfortable assurance, and a few days afterwards peacefully resigned her spirit.

Again a few months passed on, during which Captain — from time to time renewed his intercourse with Mr. S—, but without perceiving in him any increased pleasure in the things of God; though he could not help remarking that his health seemed more than usually impaired, and he heard from others, that his medical adviser felt by no means satisfied with his case. It was late one evening when a messenger arrived with a hasty summons

entreating him to come to Mr. S— without delay, for he was alarmingly ill, and awaited his arrival with deep anxiety.

The summons was obeyed, and on being ushered into the small apartment, he saw his old friend stretched upon a couch, suffering from a spasm, arising from incipient water on the chest, but, from the consternation depicted on his countenance, evidently suffering still more from the arrows of an awakened conscience.

“Oh my dear friend, how kind of you to come! You find me very ill. I am afraid I shall not recover; I fear I shall be summoned hence. All men are sinners I know, but my sins have been great,—they have been sins against light and knowledge and privileges. Oh tell me, tell me, is there any hope for such a sinner?” These questions were put in rapid and broken accents; his frame seemed to tremble with anguish, and the cold drops upon his forehead, and the convulsive movement of his hands bespoke his inward agony.

It was a scene touching in itself, and doubly so from the vivid contrast which it exhibited to the calm and placid aspect of his departed parent under similar circumstances, when visited by the same friend, but a few months previously.

Captain — was at the time suffering from various trials which to his own mind rendered him peculiarly unfitted to assume the office of a comforter to any one in spiritual distress,—but in dependence on the guidance of one who is the true Comforter, even that blessed Spirit who has promised to abide with us for ever, he endeavoured to direct the eye of the awakened and alarmed penitent to that spotless Lamb of God whose blood clean-

seth from all sin. His words, weak and insufficient as they seemed to himself, were listened to with the avidity with which a criminal who expected immediate execution, would listen to a message of reprieve and pardon. Mr. S— grasped his hand with as much tenacity as he might have clung years before to the portion of the wreck which had borne him up upon the mighty waters of the ocean; and it was some hours before he was sufficiently composed and tranquillized to quit his hold. Prayer was offered for him; he joined with earnestness in the petitions; a ray of distant hope seemed to have dawned faintly upon his soul, and Captain — left him just sinking into an exhausted slumber.

His life was spared for some weeks afterwards, during which he was frequently visited both by the minister of the Dutch congregation to which he belonged, and by Captain —. His confessions of sin were full and self-abasing, and his supplications to the throne of grace for pardon and peace, most earnest and unceasing. By degrees he was enabled to see more clearly his title to acceptance through the atonement and righteousness of a crucified and risen Saviour, and to rest for the most part in quietness and confidence upon his finished work and intercession. His peace was not however unbroken; his nervous system was considerably shattered, and from particular causes his mind was liable to both depression and excitement. His doubts sometimes sunk into terror and dismay, and his hopes at others rose to triumphant joy, though there seemed on the whole a steady growth in humble quiet peace. His end was preceded by a conflict with the temptations of the adversary, of a trying and distressing character, but in the midst of darkness light

at length sprung up. He regained his peace, and in the midst of the exhaustion and fainting which preceded his dissolution, he would speak in terms of adoring rapture of the world into which he was about to enter: "Oh what a gracious Saviour! oh, see that you love your Saviour. What glorious sights do I see! What a company of angels! What blessed spirits! See that you love your Saviour!" Such were the expressions which, to the best of my recollection, marked his dying moments.

Two instances have thus been adduced of extraordinary interpositions of God's gracious providence in favour of the son of this pious mother,—testifying by the results that although her faith was of a lively and (as some might suppose) of an imaginative character, it was nevertheless founded upon his loving attributes, who hath said, that experience worketh hope, "and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

But the loving-kindness of the Lord did not end in this family with the events which have been already related. His mercy is "from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Mr. S— left behind him a widow and an only son. The latter was a young man who had received a tolerably good education, and had been brought up with great tenderness by his parents. His disposition was reserved and timid, but affectionate and gentle, and from the circumstances which had transpired between Captain —, his father, and grandmother, he conceived a degree of attachment for that gentleman which manifested itself on several occasions. He too was visited with a season of sickness, he too sent for his father's

friend, and he too made a profession of faith in the everlasting gospel. This faith was soon put to some painful tests; for with his father's life his pension also ceased, the family inheritance was already alienated, and young Valentine S— submitted with patience and unrepining humility to various efforts to gain a livelihood, which he would a short time before have shrunk from with repugnance.

The writer has not heard of the family for some time past, but from the last accounts of them he gathered nothing which would hinder the hopeful application to young Valentine S— of the precious declaration of the patriarch, “the righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.”

CONVERSION THROUGH A MOTHER'S PRAYERS.

BY THE REV. OCTAVIUS WINSLOW.

“For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.”

It has been beautifully remarked, and with truth equal to its poetry, that “the gentlest of all living things is a mother.” With equal exactness it may be said that the deepest, holiest, and most powerful of all human feelings, is a mother’s love. But there is something welling up from a mother’s heart, deeper, holier, and more powerful still;—it is a godly mother’s prayers! There is in them a sweetness and a charm, a fragrance and a potency, which heaven feels and acknowledges. No arm so mighty, no incense so sweet, no music so melodious upon earth. Examples of maternal success in implanting the first germ of piety, in fixing early religious impressions, in alluring to virtuous determination the unformed principles, in reclaiming the mind to God, in enlisting the affections for Christ, stand forth numerous and radiant in the brilliant records of conversions to God. To the many, let us add yet one more;—a foreign pastor shall supply the fact.

Mr. L— was a young man of more than ordinary

abilities; residing in a southern clime, he partook much of that enthusiastic temperament peculiar to the southerner; his spirit was chivalrous, his disposition frank, generous, and social; few young men launched upon life with equal advantages, or with prospects more brilliant than his. To a mind highly cultivated, he united conversational powers of a commanding order, and an address easy and captivating; these, added to his amiable disposition, and family connections of extreme influence, secured him an interest in the friendship of his compeers in the circle in which he moved, while they gave him a decided superiority over many of those with whom he associated.

It may be easily imagined that the influence of such a youth was bounded only by his acquaintance; and as the circle of which he formed the centre and attraction, was widely extensive, many may be supposed to have felt the sway of his genius, acquirements, and manners, imbibing his spirit deeply, and receiving implicitly, and quoting loudly his opinions.

How fearful the responsibility of gifted individuals! and how tremendous their influence! Mind acts upon mind, opinion shapes opinion, affection inspires affection, and thus one individual, through the influence which his superiority gives him, may multiply himself almost indefinitely. We tremble at the thought! The Lord give us grace to multiply images of holiness, to employ our power over others for God, and in view of the permanence which eternity stamps upon character and life formed and disciplined upon earth.

But every picture of loveliness has its shadows. Mr. L— had, in the early part of his youth, drunk deep from

the stream of infidelity. Educated at a distance from home, far removed from the immediate control of parental authority, and encircled by circumstances hostile to parental advice, he gradually forgot the pious lessons received from a godly mother, lost the early impressions which her teaching and her example had made upon his tender mind, and at length reached a stage in his religious doubts so far as to succeed in persuading himself that Christianity was a system of priestcraft, the Bible a tissue of untruths, and the tendency of its holy doctrines to foster and promote delusion. Having graduated with honours, he quitted the university hall and returned to the parental roof, noble in form, cultivated in mind, — but an avowed and confirmed infidel!

There was one, however, from whose knowledge he sought the concealment of his religious sentiments. The love which he bore her, the deep veneration, amounting almost to a feeling of awe, with which he regarded her, forbade the immediate and full disclosure of his principles. The drapery, however, which hung loosely around them, was too transparent for a mother's piercing eye. She was appalled, trembled, and turned pale at the discovery. The charge was tenderly pressed, the acknowledgment was frankly made. They mingled their tears, and blended their emotions. But while in her heart one feeling only predominated, in his, with that of sympathetic affection, there was united pity for her weakness, and a sting of indignation at her delusion.

Time passed on. It were needless to follow him in his career of worldliness and gaiety. The charm of the circle in which he moved, all admired, all courted, and many imitated him. His sentiments were received and respected

by many of both sexes, indeed the extent of misery created by his sceptical views, can never in this life be fully unfolded, nor its traces entirely effaced. Yet with all this, he was an amiable man, an affectionate son, high-minded and honourable as a friend and companion. One thought embittered all his mother's joy, proud though she was of his intellectual character, and universal admiration and esteem. It was the reflection that he scornfully rejected her adorable Saviour. But she was a praying mother. The midnight hour witnessed to her tears and prayers for the conversion of her ungodly child. Never did she approach the throne of grace but it was to urge her suit with God to give him his Holy Spirit to change his heart. She never forgot her infidel son. Still no answer was vouchsafed. The vision tarried, and frequently her heart almost yielded to despair, trembling at the thought that God might give him over to a reprobate mind.

Mr. L— at length married, and settling upon an estate adjoining his ancestors, he became more domesticated in his habits, and more serious and grave in his feelings and deportment, but continued a zealous advocate of infidelity.

One day while pensively walking near a stream of water that flowed through his grounds, his glance fell on a leaf of paper lying upon the bank. He carelessly picked it up, and proceeding a few steps further, he picked up two or three more leaves, and placing them together he found himself in possession of a complete tract, which the wind of heaven, at the command of Him whom the winds and the waves obey, had blown to that spot. Having arranged the several leaves, he commenced read-

ing, as he walked, the silent messenger. Deeply interested in its contents he read it through. It spoke of God—of the Bible—of eternity; there seemed to be a message in it especially to himself. Again he read it, and new and strange feelings awoke, or rather revived in his bosom; feelings which he had long thought were annihilated. Having reached his home, he once more read the tract. He paused and thought—he deeply thought—“If all this be true,—what—?” the idea was too awful, he could not pursue it. He rose, and with his whole frame rocked with agitation, paced the floor; and now perhaps for the first time in his life, he felt an anxious desire to look into a Bible; but in his well-furnished library that precious book was not to be found. He recollected that a copy of the Holy Scriptures, which his mother had given him when a boy, was reposing in its long silent neglect in the book-case at his mother's residence. She had often urged him to take it home, but no! he had no use for such books! “I will send,” he thought aloud, “and borrow one; but no, that will expose my weakness.” “Yes,” catching the thought suggested by the word last uttered; “Yes, it is a weakness, and I will not submit to it. Have I not lived satisfied with my principles? What reason have I now to distrust them? Strange, that reading this tract should disturb my composure! I see how it is—I am indisposed—have been unwell all the morning, I will throw the tract aside, and think no more of the matter.”

But the lowly instrument of the extraordinary change was not to be laid aside so easily. It had seized upon the spirit of a stubborn sinner, had grappled with his infidel principles, and could not be shaken off. It gave

no ground, listened to no parley, and yielded not an inch of the contest, which now became long and serious. It was the Spirit of God moving upon his heart. The tract was taken up again, read over once more,—and it triumphed! “Yes!” he exclaimed, with a resolution, and an emphasis, which God only could inspire, “I will have a Bible!” He recollected the Bible of his youth at his mother’s; he thought too, that it was possible to obtain it, without exciting suspicion in the family,—for this purpose he stepped over to her residence. The perturbation of his mind, revealed in his countenance, alarmed the fears of his mother for the health of a son who had caused her so much solicitude and prayer. Eager and affectionate were her inquiries; but his reply that he was well, had no effect in removing her fears. The sole object of Mr. L— in paying this visit was secretly to possess himself of the pocket Bible. His mother caught his anxious glance occasionally directed to the spot where it reposed,—whose eye so searching as a mother’s? She whose glance had pierced the veil of his infidelity, now saw through the ill disguise of his convictions—she looked for a moment intently in his countenance—could it be possible! The idea forced itself upon her mind, and she almost sank under it. Could it be possible that the Spirit of God had found her lost child, and that he was now operating upon his heart! Hope and fear were strong in her bosom. Like Joseph she left the room, in order to give vent to a burst of feeling. She knew that her son had refused to have a Bible in his house. Those restless, anxious glances, gave rise to the idea that he had come for the Bible, which she, in youth, had presented to him, and which in manhood, she had so often urged

peruse. There it now stood—the pocket Bible in which her maternal hand had inscribed his name, and from whose pages in boyhood he had been wont to read to her.

After giving vent to her tears,—tears of hope and joy,—and having poured out her soul to God, she recovered in some degree her composure. Again, like Joseph, she entered the room,—her son was gone,—she sprang toward the book-case, the Bible had disappeared. Seizing it in her absence, he had borne it in triumph to his dwelling, and immediately commenced the eager and prayerful perusal of its contents. Deep was now his repentance for his sins, for the sin of his unbelief, the sin of his infidelity,—the sin of having so long and so scornfully rejected God's beloved Son, the sin of his abused influence,—the sin of the consequences of his infidelity, now, alas! beyond his power to repair. But the Bible told him of hope. It spake of salvation, of a Saviour, of a sin-pardoning, of a sinner-accepting God. He opened his now penitent heart to the precious declarations, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that heart drank in the truth, and it was comforted. He lighted upon the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," and they were to him as a healing balsam. What but the blood of the incarnate God could cleanse his sin away? The blood of souls was in his skirts—souls whom his influence had ensnared, whom his infidelity had ruined,—what but the atoning blood of Christ could obliterate the crimson stain? In that Bible he read that salvation to

a poor, lost, convinced sinner, was a salvation of free grace, "without money and without price;" that it was "of faith, that it might be by grace;" that "by grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." This was just the salvation that he needed, his ear was open to "hear the joyful sound" of the gospel, he believed it, received it, welcomed it, and was saved.

And now he was a truly converted man. Peace was in his conscience, love was in his heart, heaven was in his soul. His unbelief yielded to faith, his restless and agonising doubts to a firm persuasion that the record God had given of his Son was true, and that Jesus was the "true God and eternal life." His own righteousness he had utterly renounced, and he rejoiced that he now stood "accepted in the Beloved." The kingdom of God, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," had come into his soul, and he no longer thirsted, as once he did, for the carnal delights of sense. "A new creature in Christ Jesus," "old things had passed away, and behold, all things had become new." The infidel had become a Christian, and the Christian a happy, devoted, useful man of God. Zealous at one time in scattering the poison of infidelity, he was now doubly so, advocating, by his holy walk and conversation, his example and his labours, the glorious doctrines of the gospel. We will not dwell upon the happiness of his mother; this may be imagined, but it cannot be described. Her son had returned as a prodigal to his Father's house, and had been received and welcomed, and now her heart is right merry. Angels might envy that bliss, and learn something from that joy. Mothers! see the crown of a mo-

ther's prayers! Behold the bright morning of joy which succeeds the long dark midnight of tears, and groans, and wrestlings. It is probable that the tearful eye of a Christian mother may light upon these pages. Happy will the writer be,—himself honoured with a Christian mother, and a monument, through sovereign grace, of the power of her prayers,—if this narrative sheds one ray of hope upon her spirit, or adds one deeper throb of intensity to her holy wrestlings in behalf of her child's conversion. Let that godly mother know that as a princess she has power with God, and shall prevail. With the history of the Syro-Phenician woman before us, what Christian parent need despair? She came with an errand to Christ that touched the deepest springs of his compassion, "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; Lord, help me." For a while "he answered her not a word." Not a syllable, nor a look, nor a sign, spoke of hope to her troubled and pleading spirit. But who so persevering as a mother? "She came and fell at his feet." Her faith took hold of the Lord's strength, and she seemed to say, "I can take no denial, my case is earnest, is desperate. My daughter hath an unclean spirit; who can help her, Lord, but thou? If I perish, I perish here at thy feet." And she prevailed. "And Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He could restrain himself no longer. A diadem of glory her trembling hand had placed upon the head of his power, and in return, a crown of unfading honour he would place upon the head of her faith. And she who came as a despised dog, asking but for a mere crumb, went away a joyful mother, a crowned and prevailing princess.

We have touched upon a subject affluent in the examples it affords of the successful power of a mother's early instructions and prayers in the conversion of her offspring. Trace the histories of some of the most eminent saints and distinguished ministers, and they will be found to have been blessed with godly praying mothers. We might instance the name of Samuel, of John the Baptist, of Timothy, of John Newton, of Dr. Doddridge, of Claudius Buchanan, of Thomas Scott, of Augustine the bishop of Hippo, and a host of others, who, to the latest period of life, blessed the memory of a praying mother. A few years ago, at one of the theological colleges of America, where a large body of young men were preparing for the Christian ministry, the subject of maternal influence awoke the inquiry, how many of the members were examples of its wise and lowly direction, when it was ascertained that out of one hundred and twenty students, more than one hundred were the offspring of praying mothers. "Though some of them had broken away from all the restraints of home, and, like the prodigal, had wandered in sin and sorrow, yet they could not forget the impressions of childhood, and each was eventually brought to Jesus, as well as proved a mother's joy and blessing."

Nor is it surprising that God should impart such power to a character to which he has attached influence and responsibility so amazing. We can scarcely overrate the importance and solemnity of maternal influence. The interests confided to it are too precious to be estimated, too vast to be measured. When we say that the first seeds of thought are sown, and the first germ of holiness is implanted, and the first step to greatness is taught, and the first bend to character is given, by a mother's

hand,—we think none will regard our picture of maternal influence and responsibility as either romantic or ideal. We say, then, that God should attach such overwhelming power to a mother's prayers, should rather fill our minds with the feeling of admiration, than with the emotion of surprise.*

* In Mrs. Lee's memoir of that distinguished naturalist, BARON CUVIER, is found the following beautiful testimony to the influence and care of his mother. How far she was instrumental of developing the genius, forming the taste, and moulding the character of this eminent man, let the reader judge. That she nurtured his innate love of nature, and cultivated his fondness for flowers, who can doubt? And that her hands laid the foundation of the future greatness and fame of her son, is equally certain. "The cares of this excellent mother, during the extreme delicacy of his health, left an impression on M. Cuvier which was never effaced, even in his latest years, and amid the absorbing occupations of his active life. He cherished every circumstance connected with her memory; he loved to recall her kindnesses, and to dwell upon objects, however trifling, which reminded him of her. Among other things, he delighted in being surrounded by the flowers she had preferred, and whoever placed a bouquet of red stocks in his study or his room, was sure to be rewarded by his most affectionate thanks for bringing him what he called 'the favourite flower.' But this well-judging parent did not confine her cares to his health alone; she devoted herself equally to the formation of his mind, and was another proof of the influence that a mother's early attentions frequently shed over the future career of her son. She guided him in his religious duties, taught him to read fluently at the age of four years, took him every morning to an elementary school, and although herself ignorant of Latin, so scrupulously made him repeat his lessons to her, that he was always better prepared with his tasks than any other boy at school.—She made him draw under her own inspection; and by constantly furnishing him with the best works on history and general literature, nurtured that passion for reading, and that ardent desire for knowledge, which became the principal spring of his intellectual existence."

The reflex influence of maternal solicitude, thus hallowed and directed, is often most powerful and precious. When the work of God's grace is depressed in the soul of a Christian mother, when she cannot see with distinctness her personal interest in the Lord's salvation, when she is mourning the suspension of that joy which is strength and gladness to the soul, when there seems a distance between her heart and Jesus, let her stir herself up to the great and holy work of seeking her children's conversion. Let her, if her own case discourage her, approach to God, seek an errand to his mercy-seat, on the, perhaps, still more necessitous and urgent case of her children. They, it may be, are still in nature's enmity and darkness. They are advancing into life not knowing their mother's God, not loving their mother's Christ. They have given, as yet, no scriptural evidence of a changed heart, of a renewed mind, of real conversion to God. What an object for a mother's prayers! What an errand to the throne of grace! What a case to bring to Jesus! And now is experienced the blessed and holy reaction. Roused to seek the Lord for her children, lo! she has found him for herself! Her prayer has returned into her own bosom. She has taken a fresh hold upon God. She has caught a new view of Christ. The Holy Spirit has come into her soul with a stronger evidence than ever of her own adoption into the family, and of her interest in the Saviour's blood; and now she is adding another testimony to the thousands upon record, that they who labour to bring others to Christ, themselves are brought nearer to Christ, and that those who water others are themselves watered, and that one of the most successful remedies for a depressed state of grace in the

soul, is to go out and labour to bring souls to the Saviour. Go on praying, ye dear mothers, who are travelling a second time for the new birth of your children, that Christ might be formed in their hearts the hope of glory. Although your child may be far from God,—an infidel, a wanderer, an outcast,—yet pray on, pray on! for God delights in the fragrance, and yields to the power of a Christian mother's prayers. Go on wrestling with the angel of the covenant, and you then will exultingly and gratefully exclaim, "It is meet I should make merry and be glad; for this my son was dead, and is alive again, and was lost and is found." "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him."

LUKE HEYWOOD:

THE SOLDIER OF FORT GEORGE.

BY THE REV. T. M'KENZIE FRASER, YESTER.

DURING the middle part of last century, the parish of Resolis was blessed with one of the most eminently useful and laborious ministers that the church of Christ has ever seen. When the name of Mr. Hector M'Phail meets the eye of the more northern reader, it will recall to memory not a few of those striking anecdotes current among the older inhabitants of the district in which his labours were best known, and which may be stated generally as lying along the shores of the Beauly and Cromarty Friths. This remarkable man is said to have been awakened to spiritual concern after he had entered on the work of the ministry, and to have continued under deep distress for a period of no less than seven years, during three of which his mental sufferings were so great that he never knew what it was to have a night's complete rest. While in this state of protracted anxiety—or, as the Gaelic people expressively term it, while under “law-work”—he made a solemn vow, that should the Lord be pleased to grant him a sense of pardoning mercy, and clear views of his personal interest in Christ, he would never pass a sinner, with whom an opportunity for conversing should occur, without directing his attention to

the great concerns of eternity, and urging upon his acceptance that Saviour whom he himself had found. So religiously did Mr. M'Phail observe this vow, that his little white pony, the unfailing companion of his almost endless journeys, learned in no long time to halt of its own accord whenever it overtook a traveller; and not unfrequently, amid the bewildering darkness of night, as the icy blasts swept down from the hills over the wild solitudes of the Maol-bhui, did the sagacity of his four-footed Highland bearer remind the faithful servant of Christ that a fellow-sinner was at hand, to whom he had pledged himself to deliver a Saviour's message, and on whom he was bound to urge the acceptance of a Saviour's love. With him the salvation of souls was a perfect passion, calling forth a self-denial and devotedness almost apostolic in its type. Not unfrequently has he been known to draw some Highland herd-boy to his side, and after leading his mind to the awful importance of divine things, to purchase, by the gift of a small sum of money, the boy's promise to form habits of prayer in future—a method by which, he conceived, the youth was bound to implement his promise, according to the principles of common honesty, as well as by the sacredness of a solemn pledge. It is said that, on one occasion, when riding in the company of a brother minister, the travellers were overtaken, near Inverness, by the equipage of one of the Lords of Justiciary, who was to preside in the circuit court about to be held that day. Mr. M'Phail suggested to his brother minister that this might be a glorious opportunity of doing some spiritual good to an influential man of the world, and urged him to assist in improving the precious and unlooked-for moment. His companion,

however, being most probably one of those rule and plummet ministers, whose favourite Scripture maxim is, "Let everything be done decently and in order," was not carried away by his zeal beyond the bounds of propriety, and politely declined the invitation. But Mr. M'Phail had long learned to "be instant," not only "in season," but also "out of season;" so the willing propensities of the white pony were again put in requisition. Riding forward to the carriage, Mr. M'Phail respectfully addressed his Lordship, and, after a prefatory remark or two, reminded him that the proceedings in which the court was to engage were emblematic of another judgment-seat, at which his Lordship must appear, not as a judge upon the bench, but as a panel at the bar; entreating him at the same time, with respectful but affectionate earnestness, to weigh well the nature of his case, and to commit it in time into the hands of the great advocate with the Father, who can never be an unsuccessful pleader, because himself the propitiation for our sins. His Lordship appeared impressed with the address which he had heard; thanked Mr. M'Phail most warmly for his ministerial faithfulness, and invited him to become his guest at the close of the court.

Many such anecdotes are told of this amiable and laborious man, and numerous were the instances in which these "out-of-season" efforts in his Master's cause were savingly blessed to the souls which, "by any means," he sought to win. Among the rest the following is perhaps one of the most remarkable:—

The parish of Resolis is situated on the southern shore of the Frith of Cromarty, lying immediately to the east of the well-known Ferrintosh. In order to reach it from

the coast of Nairn, one would require to cross the Ferry of Fort George, and strike athwart the peninsular district known by the name of the Black Isle. After a journey of some eight or nine miles over an immense wilderness of the most dreary moor-land, lying along the entire back of the peninsula, you reach the church and manse of Resolis, situated in a spot which has lately been rendered a little more civilized-looking than the desert around. At the period of our story, Fort George was garrisoned by an English regiment, which partook of the unusually profligate and debauched character of the British army at that time. As the neighbouring town of Campbeltown is at some distance from the Fort, wooden shambles had been erected close to the water's edge, immediately below the garrison, to serve as a flesh-market for the convenience of the military. Having occasion one day to travel homewards by the route which, for more than one purpose, we have described, Mr. M'Phail was detained for some time below the Fort by the delay of the ferry-boat, which had to be summoned over from the opposite side. While he was standing at the water's edge, with his inseparable white companion, a soldier came into the shambles to purchase some meat, and asked the price of a quarter of mutton. The butcher named the sum. With a frightful oath, in which he pledged the everlasting salvation of his soul, the man refused to give the price, but ultimately, after a good deal of wrangling, agreed to the butcher's terms, and took up the meat to go away. All this while Mr. M'Phail, who was standing outside the shambles, overheard the conversation within, and, shocked at the awful jeopardy in which the soldier had placed his soul, was watching for an opportunity of addressing him upon

the imminent danger of his condition. No sooner, therefore, had the man left the flesh-market than Mr. M'Phail contrived to throw himself in his way and to engage him in conversation.

"A fine day, soldier."

"A fine day, sir," replied the man, touching his cap.

"Do you belong to the Fort?"

"Yes, sir, and a dull enough place it is; nothing but drill and the blues."

"You are an Englishman I see; what is your name?"

"Luke Heywood, your honour."

"That seems a nice piece of mutton you have got."

"So it is, sir, and cheap too."

"What did you give for it, may I ask?"

The soldier named the price.

"Oh! my friend," replied Mr. M'Phail, "you have given more than that."

Luke Heywood looked astonished. "No, sir, I gave no more; there's the man I bought it from, and he can tell you what it cost."

"Pardon me, friend; you have given your immortal soul for it. You prayed that God might damn your soul if you gave the very price you have just named; and now what is to become of you?"

The ferry-boat was announced as ready, and Mr. M'Phail stepped on board, while Luke Heywood walked off with his purchase, and entered the Fort. Throwing off his cap, he sat down upon a form in the barrack, and in a short time his reflections turned upon his conversation with the stranger at the ferry. The gentleman's parting words were still fresh in his memory: "You have given your immortal soul for it; and now what is to be-

come of you?" "Really," thought he, "the stranger was quite right. I have a soul, though I had almost forgotten it; and I have pawned it for a bit of mutton too. Well, I didn't mean that; but I have done it though; and now what is to become of me?" The thought, even to a profligate, was anything but an agreeable one, so he tried to banish the occurrence from his memory. But it would not do; conscience was at its work, and refused to still its voice. The words of the stranger were pealing in his ears like the death-knell of his soul: "You have given your immortal soul for it; and now what is to become of you?" In a perfect agony of terror he started from his seat, rushed bare-headed from the Fort, and arrived, all flushed and breathless, at the ferry in quest of Mr. M'Phail.

"Where is the gentleman?" cried Luke to the butcher.

"What gentleman?" inquired the other.

"The gentleman dressed in black clothes, and with a white pony, who told me that my soul was lost?"

"Oh! you mean Mr. M'Phail; he's the minister of Resolis, and you will have to go far enough till you catch him, for he has crossed more than half an hour ago."

The ferry-boat being about to make a second passage across the water, Luke Heywood entered it, with the design of following the stranger with whose words he had been so painfully impressed. Inquiring of the ferry-men the route he must follow, Luke leaped from the boat as it touched the point of Fortrose, and started afresh upon his intensely exciting pursuit. We know not the feelings of the agitated traveller as he rushed bare-headed through the little town of Rosemarkie, or toiled all

flushed and heated across the weary solitudes of the Maolbhui; we have not been informed regarding the astonishment of the shepherd or the cotter as an excited soldier hastily inquired whether he had seen anything of a clergyman upon a white pony, which was all the description he could give. He arrived, however, towards evening at the manse of Resolis, and on demanding eagerly to see Mr. M'Phail, was immediately admitted. We know not how to reconcile the statement with the rules of military discipline, but so it was, that Luke remained at Resolis all that night and the two following days, during the greater part of which time he was closely closeted with the minister. Mr. M'Phail's study was not a confessional, albeit many a poor soul had gone thither to ask counsel at the man of God; and if the walls of that little old room had but retained a transcript of the experiences to which the minister had been called to listen, how interesting the record they would now have presented of the spiritual difficulties which Mr. M'Phail had to meet—how useful to those who are intrusted with the same momentous office, and have the like responsible duties to fulfil! Numerous, however, and varied as were the spiritual cases on which this singularly godly man had been consulted, it may be questioned whether he had ever been called to deal with an experience such as Luke Heywood's. His was indeed a rare case; for into those two short days was condensed, as to its leading facts, the history which, with Mr. M'Phail, had stretched over a period of more than seven years. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." How strikingly

was the passage illustrated within the study at Resolis as the minister and the soldier knelt down together on the evening of the second day! Both were extreme specimens of the two great modes of conversion—the gradual and the sudden. He whose voice you now hear uplifted in holy thanksgiving laboured for seven long and weary years under “a horror of great darkness,” unable to appropriate as his own the Saviour of sinners; while he who kneels beside him, and weeps with joy unspeakable over a newly-found peace with God, but two days ago was foremost in the ranks of profligacy; his curse was the loudest and deepest; his revelry the wildest and most unbridled even amid the sottish jollity of the canteen; and yet of him it can be predicated just as certainly as of the other, that he is now “born of the Spirit.” Doubtless, the gradual method of conversion is the Spirit’s usual way; it is, if we may use the expression, more consistent with the structure of the human mind to adjust it by degrees to the exercise of a perfect faith, and to lead it through a course of careful, anxious, all-absorbing inquiry to the full realization of a saving interest in the work of Christ; so that the progress from “grace in the blade” to “grace in the ear,” may be very gradual and very slow. This, we repeat, is the Spirit’s usual way; and, for our own part, we are far more disposed to trust the depth and genuineness of the ordinary, than of the extraordinary manifestations of a work of grace, in so far at least as this is to be judged of by its symptoms. But still it cannot be doubted, without doing great violence both to Scripture and observation, that there have been and still are cases in which the omnipotent Spirit of God has dispensed with the employment of ordinary means; and, like the

wind which, "blowing as it listeth," does not always breathe in soft and balmy zephyrs, but anon, though seldom, bursts forth with the fierceness of the tornado to annihilate, with almost lightning suddenness, every obstacle that would arrest its tempest path; even such is the unfettered agency of that free sovereign Spirit, who will not only "have mercy on whom he will have mercy," but who will also manifest his saving grace in whatever way he pleases. Both the minister and the soldier were, we have said, types of the two opposite methods of conversion; and as they knelt down together to offer up their parting prayer, might not each have felt how true were the words of one who had himself been changed like Luke Heywood rather than like Mr. M'Phail: "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all?"

But we must leave Mr. M'Phail in the study of Resolis, and accompany Luke back to the garrison of Fort George. Happy we, if we can join him in the "new song" with which he wakes the echoes of the moorland wilds on his way back through the Maol-bhui—

"He took me from a fearful pit,
And from the miry clay,
And on a rock he set my feet,
Establishing my way."

Like the woman of Samaria, Luke Heywood now began to feel a love for the souls of others, and, with David, to say to his comrades, "Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul." The word was "as fire within his bones," and he "could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard." He accordingly began

to hold small prayer-meetings in the barracks, and to expound the Scriptures to his fellow-soldiers. By degrees, however, the piety and zeal of the former profligate became known throughout the district; the people of God were amazed when they heard that, like Paul, he that had scoffed at them "in times past, now preached the faith which once he destroyed; and they glorified God in him." His prayer-meetings attracted others than the military, and the people began to flock from the neighbouring parishes to hear the expositions of this wonderful man. An old relation of the writer used to come down among the crowd from the parish of Ardelach, a distance of about sixteen miles from Fort George; and his informant was personally acquainted with a godly old school-master who had been a fellow-soldier of Luke's (and a very wild and thoughtless young man he was,) but who, along with many others, owed his conversion to these prayer-meetings among the garrison.

But matters could not long continue thus without exciting the enmity and opposition of the ungodly. The captain of Luke's company was particularly active in his hostility to these meetings, and often threatened the pious soldier with the lash. Sending for him on one occasion, he told him that he was going from the Fort that day, and added, with a tremendous oath, that if on his return he should hear that Luke, had been holding any more of these conventicles, he would order him so many lashes. On hearing this intimation Luke was silent for a few minutes; then looking at his officer, he replied, "Sir, if you ever return alive, God never spoke by me:" an answer almost identical with that of the prophet Micaiah to Ahab, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath

not spoken by me." The issue proved that the Spirit of God was even then speaking by the lips of Luke. The captain and a brother-officer went to shoot in the neighbourhood of Culloden, and as the former was crouching behind a hedge, in the act of watching the approach of some deer, his comrade (a younger brother of his own, as we have been informed,) mistaking him for large game, took a hasty aim at the moving object, and shot him dead upon the spot.

The regiment was soon afterwards ordered to England, and it was reported that Luke purchased his discharge from the army, and became an eminently useful dissenting minister. He ceased to be a soldier of king George, that he might become a soldier of the Cross; and we have no doubt that the walls of his meeting-house would often echo with the words, "I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

THE HIGHLAND KITCHEN-MAID:

AN INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF MR. HECTOR M'PHAIL.

BY THE REV. T. M'KENZIE FRASER, YESTER.

THERE is scarce a single district now-a-days, Highland, Lowland, populous, desert, bare, or beautiful, through which we cannot find a cheap and speedy means of transit. We have our omnibuses, mails, and stage-coaches, for the road; passage-boats for our canals; steamers for our lochs and ferries; and last, speediest, and in the end cheapest of all, the railway locomotive dashes on, shot-like, on its iron pathway, hurrying us through mountain and rock, across river and valley, alike over moor-land and meadow, through the city and the field. It was not so, however, in the days of good old Hector M'Phail, still the forgotten pastor of Resolis. Stage-coaches, canal-boats, steamers, and railways, were alike unthought of in those latitudes and times; so that, however long and tedious the journey, however desolate and dangerous the roads, in the still comparatively lawless state of the Highland district, Mr. M'Phail's only resource was his shaggy little white steed, the close companion of his apostolic wanderings. O that faithful little bearer of the remarkable man of God, what a wondrous biography must it have had! How many a weary mile had it cheerfully trudged on its master's almost endless messages of mercy and love!

Where is the moor or mountain of its native Ross of which the solitudes, however lonely, have not been trodden by its trusty feet? Even the bleak Slochd-muic, from whose dark and frowning precipices the eye of my own childhood turned shudderingly away as I asked of her who sat beside me, "Is this the old world, mamma?"—even it, though buried deep in the gloomy glens of Badenoch, had echoed to the patter of its weary tread. To how many a fervent prayer, unheard by human ear, has it been called to listen! How many a dialogue, to be remembered throughout eternity, has its sagacity occasioned between its votarist master and a fellow-sinner! How many are the hours of searching self-examination, or silent study, or close communion with its master's God, that had been spent upon its back! Where was the shepherd or the cotter that knew it not, as he saw by the moonbeam's light its white form move across the moor? And how many a night has its weather-beaten rider been forced to throw the reins upon its neck, and to screen himself with his well-worn cloak against the pitiless fury of the storm, while neither pelting sleet nor drifting snow could blind the sharp eyes of his little steed, nor hinder it from bearing its sainted burden to the door of his moorland home!

Our story, however, dates far on in the month of May, a few days before the meeting of the General Assembly of the Scottish Establishment, to which Mr. M'Phail was proceeding, as a commissioner from the presbytery of Chanonry. Travelling at the rate of from thirty to forty miles a-day, his journey would occupy a full week, and would frequently oblige him to pass the night in the then by no means comfortable inns upon the Highland road.

It will not surprise any of my readers to be told that it was Mr. M'Phail's invariable practice to hold family-worship in these houses, and to insist upon the attendance of every individual inmate. Resting one night at a little inn amid the wild hills of Inverness-shire, he summoned, as usual, the family together for devotional purposes. When all had been seated, the Bibles produced, and the group were waiting the commencement of the devotions, Mr. M'Phail looked around him and asked whether every inmate of the house were present. The landlord replied in the affirmative.

"All?" again inquired the minister.

"Yes," answered the host, "we are all here; there is a little lassie in the kitchen, but we never think of asking her in, for she is so dirty that she is not fit to be seen.

"Then call in the lassie," said Mr. M'Phail, laying down the Bible which he had opened; "we will wait till she comes."

The landlord apologized. The minister was peremptory. "The scullery maid had a soul, and a very precious one," he said; "if she was not in the habit of being summoned to family-worship, all the greater was her need of joining them now." Not one word would he utter until she came. Let her, then, be called in.

The host at length consented; the kitchen girl was taken in to join the circle, and the evening worship proceeded.

After the devotions were concluded, Mr. M'Phail called the little girl aside, and began to question her about her soul and its eternal interests. He found her in a state of the most deplorable ignorance.

"Who made you?" asked the minister, putting the usual introductory question to a child.

The girl did not know.

“Do you know that you have a soul?”

“No; I never heard that I had one. What is a soul?”

“Do you ever pray?”

“I don't know what you mean.”

“Well, I am going to Edinburgh, and I will bring you a little neck-kerchief if you promise to say a prayer that I will teach you; it is very short—there are only four words in it—‘Lord, show me myself;’ and if you repeat this night and morning I will not forget to bring you what I have promised.”

The little kitchen-maid was delighted; a new piece of dress was a phenomenon she had rarely witnessed. The idea was enchanting; the condition was easy; the promise was given with all the energy of young expectancy; and Mr. M'Phail, after explaining, no doubt, the meaning and force of the prayer, retired to rest, and next morning resumed his journey.

My object is not to write a life, either in whole or in part, of Mr. M'Phail, otherwise it might be interesting to ascertain the precise date of his journey, so as to discover the character and proceedings of the Assembly in which he sat. Every one, however, must be aware that the visit of a Ross-shire minister to the metropolis is a sort of triennial era, even in these days of easy transport. This call, and that commission, have to be executed; and, if one be known to possess the least degree of the obliging in his character—*satagit rerum*—he has his hands full. Nevertheless, Mr. M'Phail did not forget the Highland inn and its little menial; but, relying upon the fulfilment of her promise, purchased the trifling present that was to make her happy.

Again, then, we accompany the devoted minister to the

wild mountains of Badenoch, and at the close of a mild June evening reach the lonely Highland inn. The white pony, now sleek and shining with metropolitan fare and a whole fortnight's idleness, is safely housed, and the minister, ere he permits supper to touch his lips, summons the household to the worship of God. Again, however, the little kitchen-maid is absent, and again he inquires the cause. But it is now a different reason that withholds her.

“Indeed, sir,” replied the hostess to Mr. M'Phail's inquiry, “she has been of little use since you were here; she has done nothing but sit and cry night and day, and now she is so weak and exhausted that she cannot rise from her bed.”

“O my good woman, let me see the girl immediately,” exclaimed the minister, instantly divining the reason of her grief.

He was conducted to a hole beneath the stairs, where the little creature lay upon a straw bed, a picture of mental agony and spiritual distress.

“Well, my child,” said the amiable man, affectionately addressing her, “here is the neck-kerchief I have brought you from Edinburgh; I hope you have done what you promised, and said the prayer that I taught you.”

“O no, sir, no, I can never take your present; a dear gift it has been to me: you taught me a prayer that God has answered in an awful way; he has shown me myself, and O what a sight that is! Minister, minister, what shall I do?”

Of course, the conversation is to be understood as having been carried on in Gaelic. This will account for the correctness of the language used by the little girl, for in Gaelic not even a child commits a grammatical error.

I need not say how rejoiced the faithful man of God was to see that the spirit of Jehovah had been dealing with this young soul, and that, although still operating as a "spirit of bondage" in the production of a true though partial and imperfect faith, there were yet such hopeful signs that, ere long, he would exhibit himself as "the Spirit of adoption," generating in her heart a full and perfect trust, and leading her to cry, "Abba, Father." But how reconcile such an experience with the strange opinion which denies to the Holy Ghost any special agency in conversion, giving to each of the human race a certain modicum of influence, to be communicated only through the medium of the word? Whence had this child derived, in the course of little more than a fortnight, and through the use of such a prayer, this experimental acquaintance with her own heart, far deeper and more correct than the author of "Know thyself" ever attained? Read the word she could not; sympathy of feeling in the careless household was out of the question; whence, then, that mysterious ray which all at once illumed the darkened chamber of the soul, and as it shot its clear strong light through the once benighted understanding, exposed in all its barrenness the deformity of self? It was the Spirit of God that wrought independently of the word, coming into "warm contact" with her living soul in a manner altogether special, and hitherto unknown by herself or a carnal world. It was "the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but she knew him, for he dwelt with her and was in her." On no other principle can we account for the fact, that one, but a few weeks ago so totally ignorant that she had asked "What is a soul?" should now have been able to pursue that most difficult

and severe of all subjective mental processes—the reflex inspection of self. Now, this is no fictitious case got up for the occasion; “I tell but what was told to me;” but who that reads it can deny the absolute necessity of a special agency and a personal and immediate indwelling of the blessed Spirit sent forth into the soul in answer to the prayer: “Lord, show me myself?”

After some further conversation, Mr. M'Phail opened up to the distressed girl the great gospel method of salvation, and closed the interview by recommending the use of another, and equally short and comprehensive prayer: “Lord, show me thyself.” Next morning the minister was once again on his way to his still distant home. But he had “cast his bread upon the waters;” did he ever “find it again after many days?”

Many years had passed since this memorable journey, and the vigorous and wiry minister, who could ride forty miles a day for a week without intermission, was now become an old and feeble man, worn out in his Master's service, scarcely any longer “spending,” because already “spent,” for Christ. One day his servant intimated that a stranger was desirous to speak with him. Permission being given, a respectable matronly woman was ushered into the study, carrying a large parcel in her hand.

“You will scarcely know me, Mr. M'Phail,” said the person, with a modest and deferential air.

The minister replied that he certainly did not recognize her.

“Do you remember a little scullery maid at — inn, in whose soul you once took a deep interest upon your journey to Edinburgh?”

Mr. M'Phail had a perfect recollection of the events.

“I was that little girl; you taught me two short but

most expressive prayers. By the first I was brought to feel my need of a Saviour; by the second I was led to behold that Saviour himself, and to view Jehovah in the character of a reconciled God and Father in Christ. I am now respectably married, and comfortably settled in life; and although the mother of a numerous family, have travelled far to see your face, and to cheer you, by telling with my own lips the glorious things which, by your means, the Lord has been pleased to do for my soul."

Before parting with Mr. M'Phail she entreated his acceptance of the parcel she carried, which contained a large web of linen of her own spinning, made long before, for the purpose of being presented to the blessed and beloved old man, should she ever be permitted to see his face in the flesh once more.

She lived for many years, not only a consistent character, but an eminently holy Christian.

Fain would I add a few of the many reflections which this striking anecdote has occasioned me. But I am not preaching a sermon, I am writing a simple story. Yet one short question to the reader ere I close. Friend, hast thou ever seen thyself? Has the hideous pollution of thy inner self ever been disclosed to thee in but a tithe of its real intensity and guilt? If not, thou hast never felt thy need of a Saviour from sin, and we have yet to begin with thee at the very starting point of experience, and to teach thee the prayer: "Lord, show me myself."

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